

The Magi's Handbook

A Walkthrough Tutorial & Reference Manual
for the World of Serpent's Tongue





Awaken to Magick

WALKTHROUGH, ACTS I & II

This Walkthrough takes new players through all the basics of Serpent's Tongue by re-enacting two battles: a one-versus-one competitive Magi battle and a two-Magi-vs-Encounter cooperative battle. To begin your path into magick more easily, we recommend gathering the game materials and having a player read this tutorial out loud.

THE CRUCIBLE UPDATE

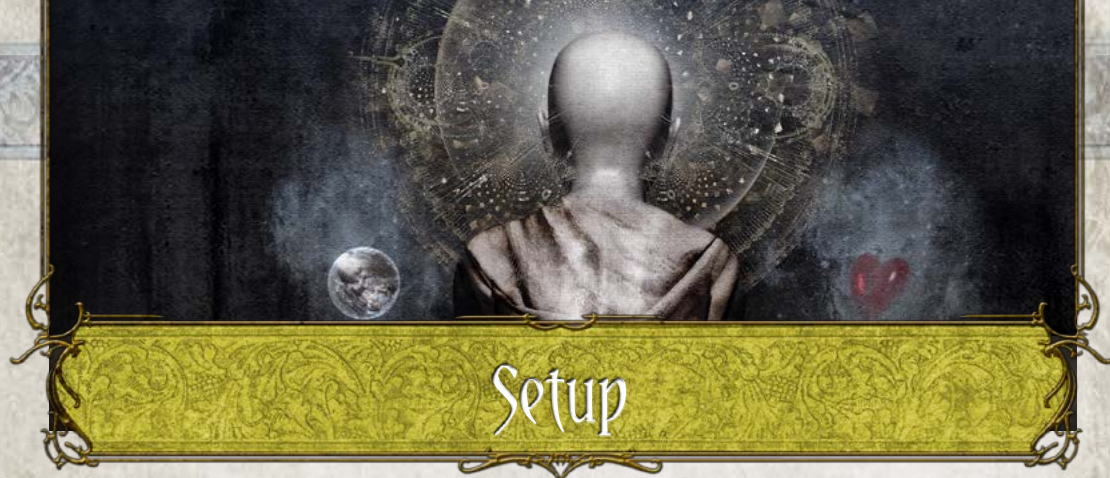
This document contains rule changes and improvements over the initial launch version of Serpent's Tongue. This new rule set is called The Crucible Update. Rules presented in this document supersede those found in the Core Set's rulebook. See the Reference Manual section after the Walkthrough for revised rules.



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It is recommended that new players begin with Walkthrough Act I, but for larger groups or quicker introductions, try the Quick Start Rules.



Core Set Contents

108 Cards

2 Hardbound Spell Codex Binders

2 Sets of Codex Pages with Pockets.

2 Energy Trackers

10 Tracker Screws & Washers

1 Focus Gem

1 Ten-Sided Die

1 Sand Timer

3 Sheets of Various Tokens*

* These tokens will be explained as you learn the game. Some of these tokens are not used in the core game – they have been included to facilitate future adventures and cooperative campaigns.

Assemble thy Codex

Open your shrink-wrapped Codex pages. Attach the enclosed pockets to at least 12 pages creating 24 pockets. Extra pockets have been included in case some have mis-cut holes. Any of the pages can be used with pockets and in any order. It is up to you!



1. Slide a Codex page into a clear plastic pouch, lining up the punch-holes.

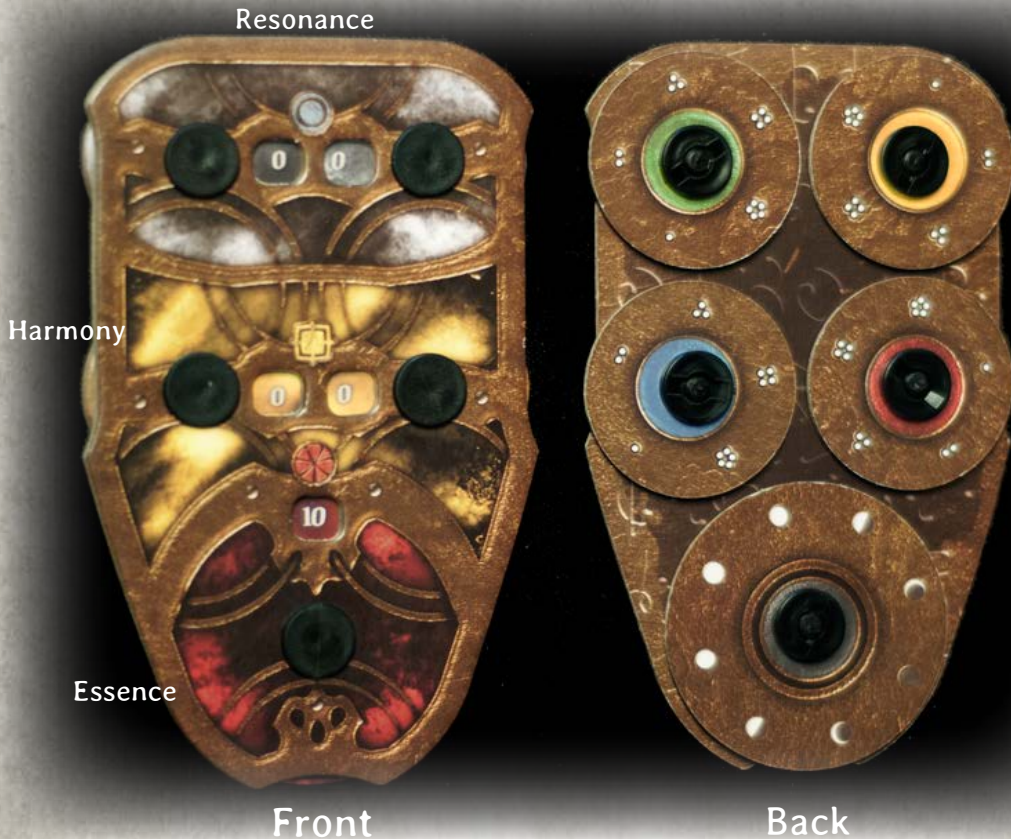
2. This will create a card pocket on each side.

3. Then place the pages into a Codex-binder.



(Note the orientation of the map pages is intentional and will be used in online mystery paths & puzzles).

Assemble the Energy Trackers



Punch out the Energy Tracker and Dials. Using the black dial screws and washers attach the dials according to the chart above. NOTE, be sure that the numbers are facing the right way in their windows. They windows are used to create double digits. This tracker will represent three of the five energies of a Magi (the 4th and 5th are tracked with tokens).

Resonance (power), Harmony (balance) & Essence (health).

The back side of the tracker will be utilized in future campaigns.

Divide the Cards by Sphere

Open the Spell Cards

Open the two shrink wrapped card decks. Divide the cards by sphere (see right). Then separate out each sphere's level 1 spells (See below.) Set aside all of the other cards.



Fluency Level

Fluency level is shown by the number of pips on the lower right of the spell. This level represents the degree of sophistication the spell was originally inscribed with. Higher fluency spells are more difficult to Intone but are either more powerful or more efficient.



Fluency level 1

Become a Magi

Designate one player to be the Black Magi, and the other player to be the White Magi. The Black Magi will serve as the trainer and read speaking parts of this walkthrough out loud (all the parts in this Font). ***Bold Italic text is optional.***

You may want to get a glass of water...

Filling the Codex

Place all of the suggested spells into the pockets of your Codex image side up. Magi are never allowed to look at the inscription side of spell cards (back side) once play begins.

You can place more than one spell in each Codex pocket, but leave the front pocket empty - this is where you will place your prepared spells.

The White Magi should gather a Codex using all of the level 1 Soul & Matter spells.



The Black Magi should gather a Codex using all of the level 1 Bio & Forces spells.



Laws of the Codex

A Magi's Codex can only bind and contain 27 spell inscriptions. A Codex may only contain up to 3 spells with the same name. There also some limitations on how many level 3 and level 4 spells your Codex can contain. You can explore those when you are ready under the Codex heading of your glossary.

SOLO PLAY

If you are playing this solo, then you will be the White Magi. Gather the Black Magi's spells into a pile but do not worry about preparing them or tracking the Black Magi's Resonance. There are many more solo adventures and encounters being developed for Serpent's Tongue.



Tutorial Spells

Place the spells in your Codex in the following order.
White Magi Tutorial Spells:

Pillar of Earth



2 x Acidic Matter



Air Essence



Materia Binding



Karmic Debt



Purification



Judgement



Counters, Gems & Dice.

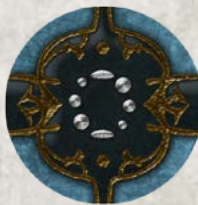
Gather the Duration, Durability, charge, and interrupt stone counters and place them within easy reach of both players.



Duration



Durability



Charge



Interrupt Stone

Black Magi Tutorial Spells:

2 x Fireball



2x Dissolve Tissue



Cellular Degeneration



Cellular Augmentation



Beast Form



Infernal shot



Will

Each player sets their energy tracker to 7 Essence (red) for the first stage of the walkthrough. Normally, each Magi begins with 12 Essence, 0 Resonance & 0 Harmony.

Essence to 7 (usually 12)

Each Magi needs a Focus Gem. You can use the token shown here, but many Magi like to find more impressive or personal objects to use for this. After all, it is YOUR Focus.



Focus Gem

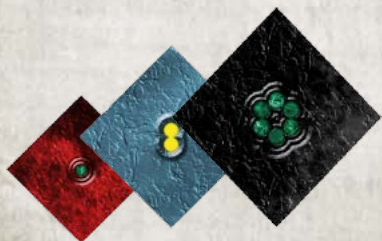
The Serpent's Key (Optional)

Find page 27 of your Codex. It has the level 1 Serpent's Key on it. Either place this in an easy-to-find location in your Spell Codex or pull it out and place it on the table.

This Serpent's Key displays short words in each of the spaces, the names of each letter of the Sehimu Thinara alphabet. The back side is for fluency level 2+.

This will be used with the optional casting system to 'Intone' your spells. We will not be Intoning spells in part 1 of the walkthrough. We will attempt this advanced casting in Act II.

(Note: Intoning spells is an optional advanced technique that involves actually speaking the cast phrase of a spell and making the correct hand gesture! If successful, Intoning gives the caster an energy called: Voice, tracked using the small diamond / square counters. The caster earns an amount of Voice equal to the spell's fluency level. Voice is used to upgrade your Specialization and generate Will, another advanced energy we will train with in Act II.)



Delivered along with your chest was the following letter folded and sealed...

You are Magi.

It is not something that I have the occasion to tell someone very often as it is rare that I find a time-worn soul before their emergence. Yet, here we are. You are one of the eternal, the reborn who understand the world in ways that most cannot imagine. You see the world for what it is: a fabric of creation that isn't static but is fluid and susceptible to influence and change. You have lived many great lives before this and, though you may think it silly, all you must do to reclaim your power is remember.

Tell me, do you remember yesterday? How about the day before that? What were you doing exactly one week ago? Do you really remember? Or, are you simply guessing based on what your schedule might have been?

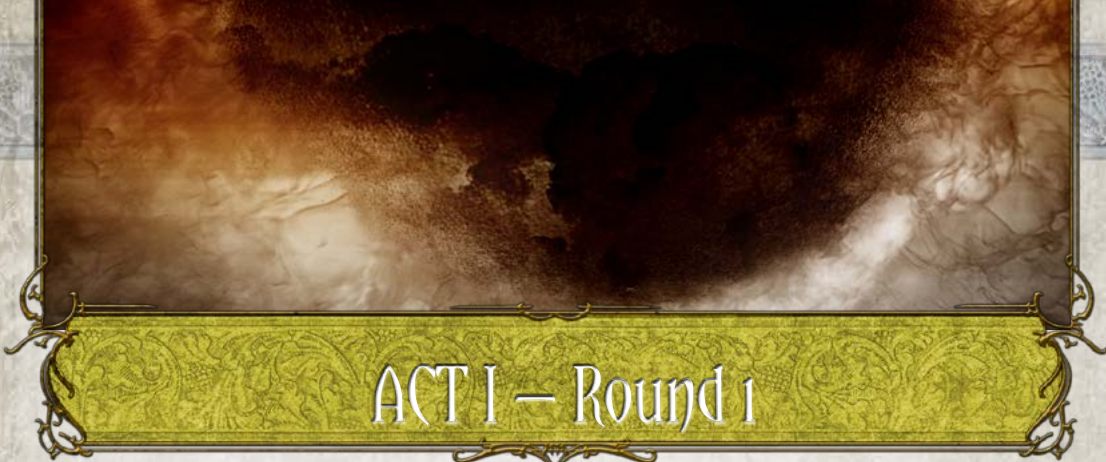
What if I am specific about the moment? What if I asked you to close your eyes and think of your happiest birthday? Can you see the picture of it?

Remembering who you were is much like this, it is easier to remember the times that were important, the times that held the most meaning.

Let's start with something simple. Open your chest and try to remember when you last saw the contents....

Christopher Gabrielson





ACT I – Round 1

Upon reading the words, your mind turns inward, deeper than you realized it could go. It turns past memory and reaches for something before memory.

You recall the Tower.

From a distance, it was easy to think of the vast spire that stretched ever upward to the clouds as standing alone in the wilderness. Those who lived in the shadow of the great pillar knew that there was much more to it. They lived in a civilization of wisdom and prosperity thriving at the tower's base. It was said that a man could walk the halls of the tower and the wisdom inscribed upon the stones for a hundred lifetimes, never reading the same words twice.

It was there that you lived and meditated, studied and waited — waited for ascension.

Do you remember when it came? Do you remember who was there? The master clad in black? He spoke to you then, in that way of his — so familiar even now. He introduced you to their world, just as he had been introduced before:

In the beginning, there was silence. That silence was broken by the words. As the words spoke, the universe listened. At first, the listeners were mute, but there came a day when a child was born who could declare the words. He became the reverberation, the echo, and it is he who taught the chosen to speak.

As it was before, so it is now. I stand here as the voice and you as the echo. Through my speech you shall learn the words and through your echoes you shall learn their meanings.

From the beginning, many Magicks have existed in this world. Few have mastered them all. When the first echo began to learn, he learned first of the Magicks of conflict. The destruction of his mother's age brought many dangers into the world.

As it was before, so it is now. All Magi must learn the words of war to guard against the perils of this age.

Hear my words, for I am your voice; prepare yourself for you are my echo. Within this time honored union our battles commence not here between us, but in the endless possibilities of our mind. Concentrate and remember this event. For even though these trials occur in the space between thoughts, the lessons in both triumph and defeat are as real as any you will face beyond this circle. Let us begin...

Continue to read aloud all portions of this walkthrough written with the regular font. *The italic font is used for sections that are optional to speak.*

Learning Magick

We will begin your study of Magick with the mystical energies of a Magi. There are three key energies of a Magi shown on your Energy Tracker, and 2 advanced energies we will study later.



RESONANCE

Resonance is power. It is your primary energy used to cast spells.



HARMONY

Harmony measures how much stress a spell places on the weave of Reality. Harmony, unlike other energies, can go negative. Going too far negative risks damaging yourself through Discord Events.



ESSENCE

Essence is the internal energy that sustains a Magi's life even in the face of terrible destructive forces. It is NOT infinite, however, and most matches are over once a team no longer has Essence.

Studying your Spell Inscriptions

Now let us study your spells. An inscriber created your cards, called Spell Inscriptions. He or she included an overwhelming amount of information. Stay calm. To cast magick, you only really need to understand three parts of the card for now.

1. The Energy Orbs that set the cost of a spell.
2. The Aspect List that describes the workings of the spell.
3. The Requirements Field that indicates things you must do to cast this spell.

*The Energy Orbs:
Resonance & Harmony paid
or gained from the spell.*

*The Aspect List:
The spell's Descriptors,
Directives & Empowerments.
(Everything the spell is and
does.)*

*The Requirements Field:
! Additional needs to cast the spell.*



The other areas of the Spell can be ignored for now!

Aspects List Closer Up

This list describes everything the spell does and how it does it. There are three potential parts to an aspect list. Spells may have none, some, or all three parts.



The aspect list is divided into

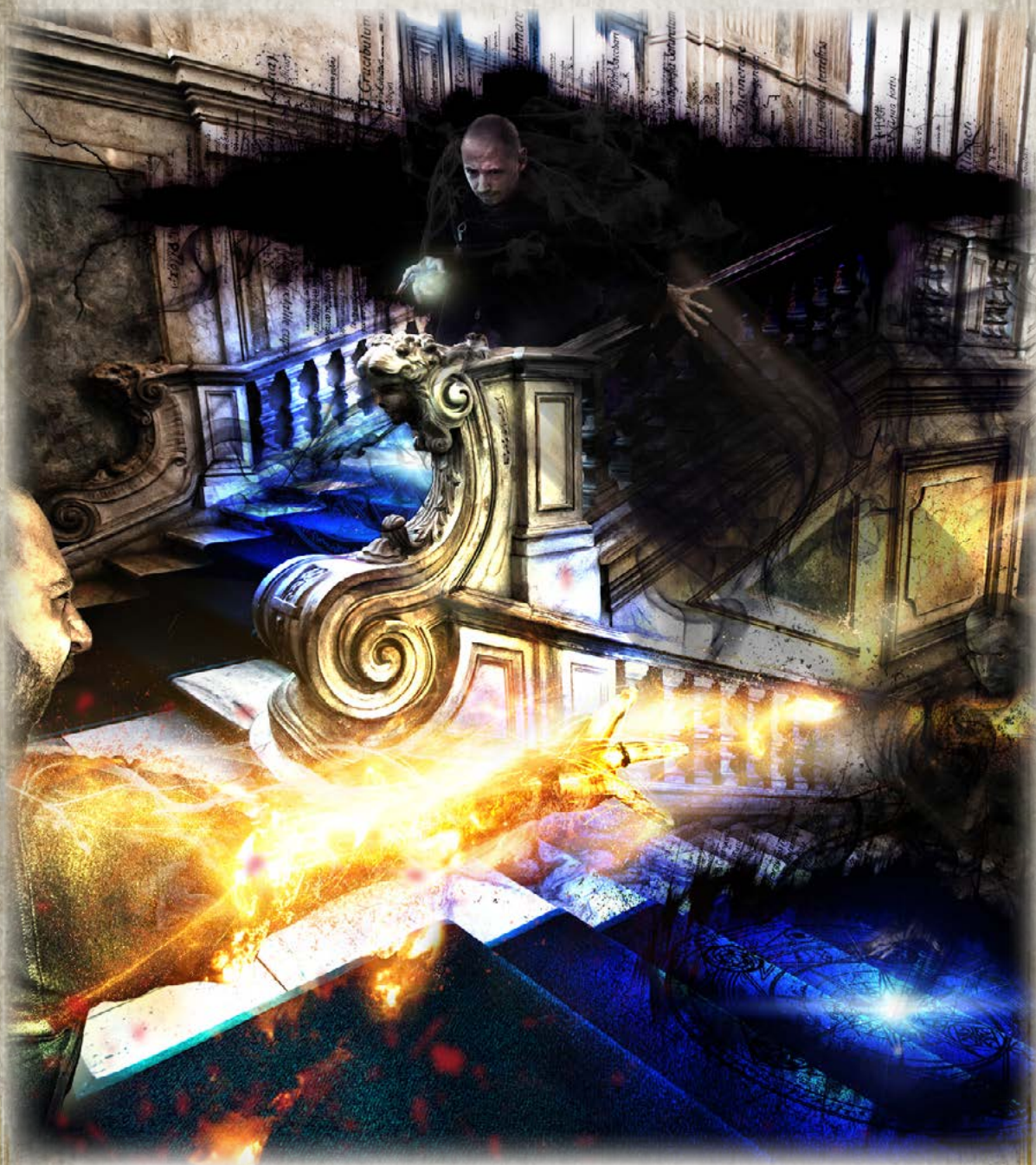
Descriptors | **Directives** | *Empowerments*

Descriptors have no default effect, they are just extra sub-types (such as Heat, Electric, Temporal, etc.) that allow the spell to synergize with other effects.

Directives are always in red; each time the spell 'hits' it will do this.

Empowerments are bonus powers the spell has, like Duration (hits more than once) or Area (hits more targets). There are many different empowerments that you can look up in the glossary when you come across them.

That is enough lecture. The best way
to learn magick is to just jump in:
Let's begin a match!

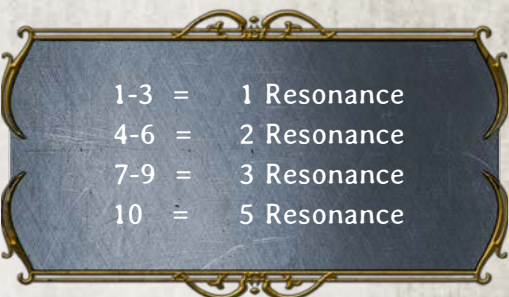


*Two Magi battle in a Keeper-Warded training site.
The wards allow them to fight intensely without risking death.*

Round 1

Initiative Phase

Each round always begins with a Resonance roll. To make a Resonance roll, either of us rolls the 10-sided die and then both of us gain Resonance from the same roll according to this chart.



1-3	=	1 Resonance
4-6	=	2 Resonance
7-9	=	3 Resonance
10	=	5 Resonance

Let's assume we rolled a 7 on this 10-sided die. Both of us set our energy tracker to 3 Resonance. Do so now.

We need to determine **initiative** — who plays first this round. The player with highest amount of Harmony goes first, then Resonance, then Will. At level 1 play, we will not use the advanced energies of Harmony or Will. For this walkthrough initiative will just be determined through Resonance. When energy is tied, as it is now, simply roll a die; the player that wins the roll may choose who goes first.

Let's assume that I, the Black Magi, won the roll and chose to go first.

Maintenance Phase

The second phase, the maintenance phase, is when all Duration effects are resolved and their Duration reduced. But, as this is the first turn and there are no active effects, we can skip it.

Spell Preparation

The third phase is spell preparation. As Magi, we have attuned ALL of our spells currently in our Codex, but it takes several vital moments of mental concentration to begin to unlock the energies encoded into these inscriptions for casting.

This is done simultaneously by all Magi during the spell preparation phase by placing spells in the front pocket of their Codex.

*Magi may prepare **UP TO** 3 spells, Magi may only cast prepared spells!*

I will prepare Fireball & Dissolve Tissue. We can actually prepare THREE spells, but we will not use the 3rd spell this round, so for the sake of time we will not bother with prepping the 3rd spell option.

You, the White Magi, will prepare Pillar of Earth & Acidic Matter.

Find these and place them in the front pocket of your Codex. These spells have now been 'prepared' for casting.

Action Phase

Now the magick begins! We take turns casting our prepared spells and taking other actions.

Each Player has 2 Full Actions every round.

Casting a spell requires a Full Action unless the spell card designates that it is a Free Action.

This is an important point to understand: Magi may prepare up to 3 spells, but will usually only cast 2 since they only have 2 Full Actions. Unless the 3rd spell has the Free Action empowerment, it just provides an alternative option for your casts.

I will go first because I have initiative. For my first Action I will meditate to gain 2 Resonance.

Any Magi may spend a Full Action to Meditate to receive 2 Resonance (plus 1 Harmony in advanced games).

Now it's your turn. Find and pull forth your Pillar of Earth spell.



Round 1

SPELL ROLES

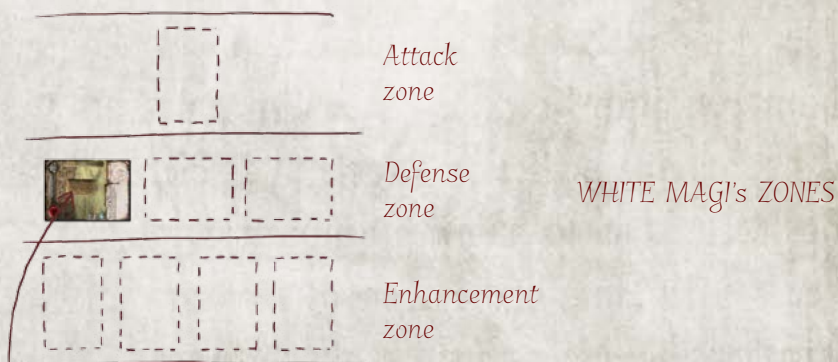


We will explore the other three spell roles later.

Placing Spells

Pillar of Earth is a Component spell, which is one of the major Spell Roles. Component spells do not often accomplish much by themselves. They are reagents and ingredients to other more-powerful spells.

Zones in Serpent's Tongue are abstract areas or 'rows' on the table where you place spells. Zones organize the play area and establish resolution timing. Components are always placed in the Defense zone, turned sideways so opponents can read what type of Component it is.



Place Pillar of Earth sideways in your 'Defense' zone.



Now that you have placed Pillar of Earth, you must pay for any costs or requirements associated with the card.

This card generates **POSITIVE** Resonance, indicated by the positive number in the blue Resonance Orb here.

If this had been a red, negative number instead, then you would have to pay this amount. If you were unable to pay this amount, then you could not cast the spell. So, you earn 1 Resonance, which you gain now. Then there is a Response phase which we will skip during Act 1 of this walkthrough. The spell then activates. A giant pillar appears on the battlefield.

Well done, you have cast your first spell. The turn now shifts to me, the Black Magi.



Round 1

Black Magi's 2nd Action

I have enough Resonance to cast Fireball at you.

I place the Fireball in YOUR attack zone.

Fireball has a red -5 in its Resonance Orb, so I pay 5 Resonance. It then activates.



Once it activates it immediately 'impacts' or 'hits'. You have no Defenses that will block this Forces spell so it impacts on you directly. Just as a reminder, what effect spell has by default is listed out in what is called its aspect list. This is where all the essential information about a spell is listed. The aspect list will include descriptors, directives and empowerments.

Fireball has the descriptor "Heat". Descriptors have no inherent effect. They are keywords that allow the spell to synergize with other spells. Fireball also has the directive: "Dmg 2" which means this spell's effect is to subtract 2 from your Essence. Do this now. Because Fireball does not have any Duration, it is now discarded.



Reminder:

The aspect list is divided into

Descriptors | Directives | Empowerments

Directives tell you what the spell does when it hits the target.

White Magi's 2nd Action

Now let's see an example of a more complex spell. For your second action, attack me with your Acidic Matter spell. Pull it forth and place it in my Attack zone. Now you pay its energy costs and fulfill its requirements. Acidic Matter has a -3 Resonance cost. Pay this now.

The Requirements Field

Acidic Matter has another requirement in addition to the Resonance cost. Such requirements, if any, will always be listed in the requirements field (outlined in red in the image at left). The requirements field is always the line of text that follows a **!** symbol on a card. It will describe other energies, cards or conditions required to cast the spell.

Acidic Matter requires: Discard Matter Component. The caster must choose a Component from the Matter sphere that he or she controls and discard it. Control means the caster must have either originally cast the Component or somehow have taken it over from another Magi during combat.



Requirements Field

Round 1

Discard your Pillar of Earth spell. (Discarded spells are simply placed to the side. They cannot be used until they are re-attuned to your Codex. You will be taught how to do that later on.)

Now that all requirements have been met, Acidic Matter activates. Acidic Matter immediately impacts. Since I have no defenses, your spell impacts upon me directly and causes 1 Essence Dmg — unless otherwise specified all Dmg subtracts Essence. So now I reduce my Essence by one on the energy tracker.



Acidic Matter has a second difference from Fireball: it has the Duration Empowerment.

*Duration
Counters*

DURATION

Duration is identified in the aspect list as well as with an Empowerment Icon along the left side of the card shown as the hourglass icon (see diagram on previous page). You do not need to worry about the Empowerments bar at this time it is only a quick reference to help aid in quickly selecting spells.



When a spell has Duration, place that many Duration counters on top of it when it activates. One counter will be removed during each maintenance phase. Attack spells like this will impact each time you remove a Duration counter.

Thus, Acidic Matter will continue to damage me for TWO more maintenance phases.

Round Complete!

Neither of us have remaining actions. The round ends. I have 1 spell prepared that I never cast, so I unprepare it now by moving it back into my Codex. If I want to cast it next turn, I will need to prepare it again.

Congratulations! You have successfully concluded your first round of Serpent's Tongue. You now know more than half of everything you need to play on your own. Serpent's Tongue, like the study of Magick itself, is a deep game. But after a single battle, all of these details should become much more intuitive and natural.

End of Round 1 Summary:

The White Magi has 5 Essence and 1 Resonance.

The Black Magi has 6 Essence and 0 Resonance.

Training Summary

Casting Spells: Remember that to cast a spell you simply place it in the target zone, and pay its costs in the energy orbs and fulfill any requirements.

The Aspect List: will tell you what the card does, for example, whether it has Duration, by listing descriptors, directives and empowerments.

Battle Tactics

This first round illustrates one of the key differences between Forces and Matter.

Forces uses a lot of energy for burst Dmg. Matter spells are cheaper, energy-wise, but require investing Actions into creating the building blocks necessary for their powerful Duration-based spells. This Acidic Matter will end up doing more Dmg than the fireball, but more slowly. Each Sphere has its own mechanics, strengths and weaknesses!



Round 2

Initiative Phase

For round 2, let's assume you rolled a 4, so each of us gains 2 Resonance. Now you have 3 Resonance and I have 2.

Since you have more Resonance you gain initiative.

Maintenance Phase

In this phase, all Duration effects are resolved and counted down. Effects are resolved zone-by-zone by all Magi simultaneously. Resolve zones in this order: Attack, Defense, Enhancement. Within each zone, the Magi whose zone it is picks which spell to resolve first.

In this case, we begin the maintenance phase by resolving your Acidic Matter that is sitting in my Attack zone. It applies its effect on me: a 1 Dmg Matter Attack. I lose 1 Essence. I then remove a Duration counter from the spell. This spell has been resolved. We move on to Defenses then Enhancements, but there is nothing else active to resolve.

As a reminder, each round always begins with a Resonance roll and then identifying initiative. To make a Resonance roll either player rolls the 10-sided die and then all players collect Resonance counters according to this chart:

1-3	=	1 Resonance
4-6	=	2 Resonance
7-9	=	3 Resonance
10	=	5 Resonance

Determine initiative - The player with highest amount of Harmony usually goes first, then Resonance, then Will, then Essence, but for level 1 play we will just go by Resonance and Essence.

RESOLVING SPELLS IN MAINTENANCE



Start with spells in the Attack Zone, then the Defense zone and finally the Enhancement Zone. Pay any sustain costs, impact the effect, remove a Duration Counter.

Spell Preparation

We can move on to spell preparation.

For demonstration purposes, this round you should prepare the Matter Spells: Air Essence and Materia Binding of Mal-kuth. (Again, we actually can prepare three spells but it is not necessary in this guided walkthrough.)

I will prepare both of my Dissolve Tissue spells.

We need to find these spells and place them in the front pocket of our Codex.

Round 2

Action Phase

You have initiative, so first cast Air Essence.

This is a Component spell so it is placed sideways in your Defense zone, 'Pay for the spell' which in this case means you GAIN 1 Resonance. This Component is now active.

For my turn, I will cast my first Dissolve Tissue spell.

This is an Attack spell; therefore it is placed in your Attack zone and I must pay 1 Resonance to activate it. Then, it immediately impacts causing you to lose 1 Essence. It has no Duration, so it is immediately discarded.

It's time for you to do something about my relentless assault...

You should now pull forth your Materia Binding of Mal-kuth and cast it.



Durability Shields

This spell is a Defense spell, so it should be placed sideways in your Defense zone with the Shield bar facing outwards so I can read which Spheres this Shield blocks.

This spell requires you to pay 2 Resonance, and to discard a Gas component. Do so now. This Shield now activates and you place 3 Durability counters on it.

Spells with Durability stay active as long as they have Durability. Shields attempt to block any spell 'sourced' from the Spheres specified. This Shield blocks Bio, Matter and Forces spells. Each time it blocks an effect, remove ONE Durability counter.



I will now cast my remaining Dissolve Tissue spell. This spell goes to your Attack zone as usual and I pay 1 Resonance to activate it as usual. But this time, instead of impacting directly on you, your Shield will block this effect because it's a Bio spell. Rather than doing any damage to you, it simply removes 1 Durability from your Materia Binding of Mal-kuth.

Since Dissolve Tissue has no Duration, it is discarded after impacting.

Your Shield will likewise be discarded when it no longer has Durability.

This was my last Action so Round 2 ends!

The White Magi has 4 Essence and 2 Resonance.

The Materia Binding with 2 Durability is in White Magi's Defense zone.

The Black Magi has 5 Essence and 0 Resonance.

The Acidic Matter is still in the Black Magi's Attack zone.

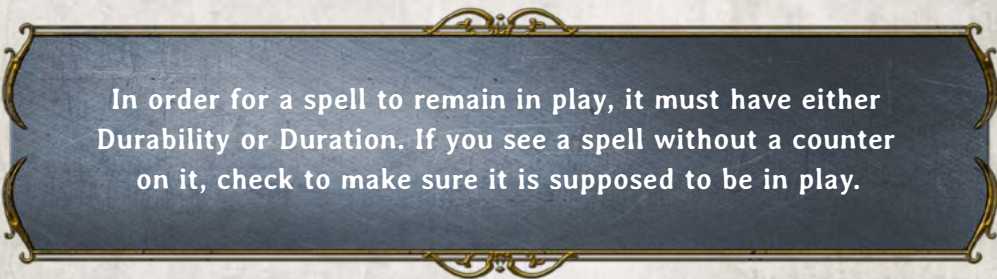


Round 3

Initiative Phase

Once again, we begin each round by one of us making a Resonance roll. Let's assume you rolled a 0 this time, so we both gain 5 Resonance. Yes! Feel the power! This is called a Resonance Overload. In Act II we will learn why it is not always such a good thing. For now, enjoy the boost.

You have 7 Resonance now and I have 5, so you have initiative. Next is maintenance. Once again, I must suffer your ongoing Acidic Matter. It impacts directly on me since I have no Shields. I lose 1 Essence. The last Duration counter is removed at the time of impact, so this spell is now discarded because it no longer has any Duration. We are now tied at 4 Essence each.



In order for a spell to remain in play, it must have either Durability or Duration. If you see a spell without a counter on it, check to make sure it is supposed to be in play.

Spell Preparation & Re-attunement.

During Spell Preparation, players may re-attune spells from their discard pile back into their Codex.

You may only re-attune one spell per round, and you must pay 1 + the fluency level of the spell in Resonance to do so.

Re-attunement Continued...

The primary exception to this is the Bonded empowerment. You may re-attune as many Bonded spells as you like without it counting towards your 1 spell re-attunement limit and you only have to pay 1 Resonance for each Bonded spell.

I need some more Dissolve Tissue spells so I will now pay 1 Resonance to re-attune one to my Codex. It only costs 1 Resonance because Dissolve Tissue is Bonded. Many of the lower level spells have the Bonded empowerment.

Pay 1 Resonance and take a Dissolve Tissue and place it back into your Codex.

You on the other hand are going to need some more Matter Components. You may re-attune both your Air Essence and Pillar of Earth spells because they both have the Bonded empowerment. You must pay 1 Resonance each for these.

Have the White Magi pay 2 Resonance and place both of their Matter components back into their Codex.

You should prepare Karmic Debt and Pillar of Earth.

I will prepare Cellular Degeneration and my re-attuned Dissolve Tissue.

Magi may re-attune 1 non-Bonded and unlimited Bonded spells during spell preparation

Action Phase - Curse Spells

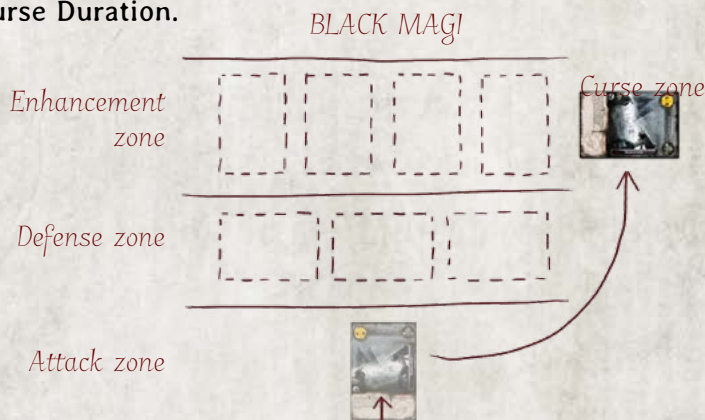
Once again, you have initiative. Pull forth your Karmic Debt spell and cast it on me.

Place this spell in my Attack zone then pay 3 Resonance to activate it. I have no Defenses so it successfully impacts directly on me.

Round 3

Curses

When a Curse spell successfully impacts directly on its target (in other words, it is not stopped by any sort of Defense spell), it becomes an active Curse and it is placed sideways next to the target's Enhancement zone. Curses are identified by their black Status bars and the fact that they have Curse Duration.



Once a Curse spell moves behind the bearer's Defense Zone, it is no longer affected by Defenses because it is now 'behind' the Defenses. It may cause ongoing passive or active effects. From now on we will include Curse zone in the maintenance phase.

Karmic Debt has a Persistent Curse Duration (you can place the Persistent Duration marker on it to help you remember this). Curse Duration is different from regular duration: it only activates if the spell successfully impacts on a target. If it is blocked or evaded then it is discarded. From now on, while Karmic Debt is active, each time I cast a spell on you, I will have to place a charge on Karmic Debt.



You will be able to use those Karmic Charges to cause me damage, build Shields and cause other problems for me.

I dislike that Karmic Debt on me but for now I will ignore it. I will cast my own curse on you: Cellular Degeneration.

I place it in your attack zone and pay the 3 Resonance to activate it.

Normally your Shield would block a Bio attack, but this Curse has the Subtle empowerment.

The Subtle Empowerment

Standard Shields cannot block Subtle effects. If your Shield had the Refined aspect, it could stop my Subtle effect, but it doesn't. So, my Curse just bypasses your Shield. As a consolation, at least it doesn't cause any Durability loss.

This means it impacts directly upon you and becomes an active Curse.

Just to reiterate, once a Curse successfully impacts it is moved next to the bearer's Enhancement zone and Duration counters are put on it equal to its Curse Duration amount (3 in this case). Never place Curse Duration counters on a spell unless it successfully got past the target's Defense zone. If it misses then it is discarded.

Because I cast an offensive spell (any spell placed into an opponent's zone is considered offensive), I must place a charge on the Karmic Debt spell. Keep an eye on this: it's easy to forget!

Now you should cast your Pillar of Earth spell.

Place it in your Defense zone and collect 1 Resonance.

I cast Dissolve Tissue.



Subtle empowerment



Duration counters are used for regular Duration and Curse Duration.

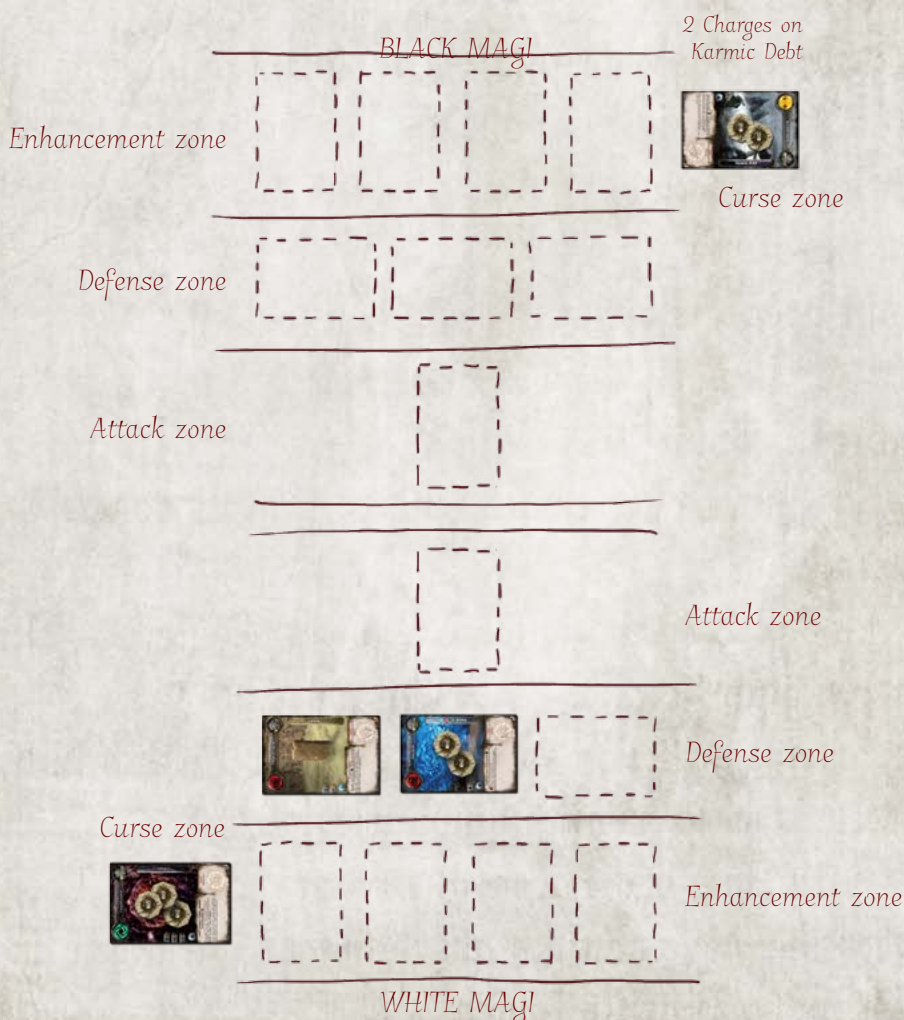
Round 3

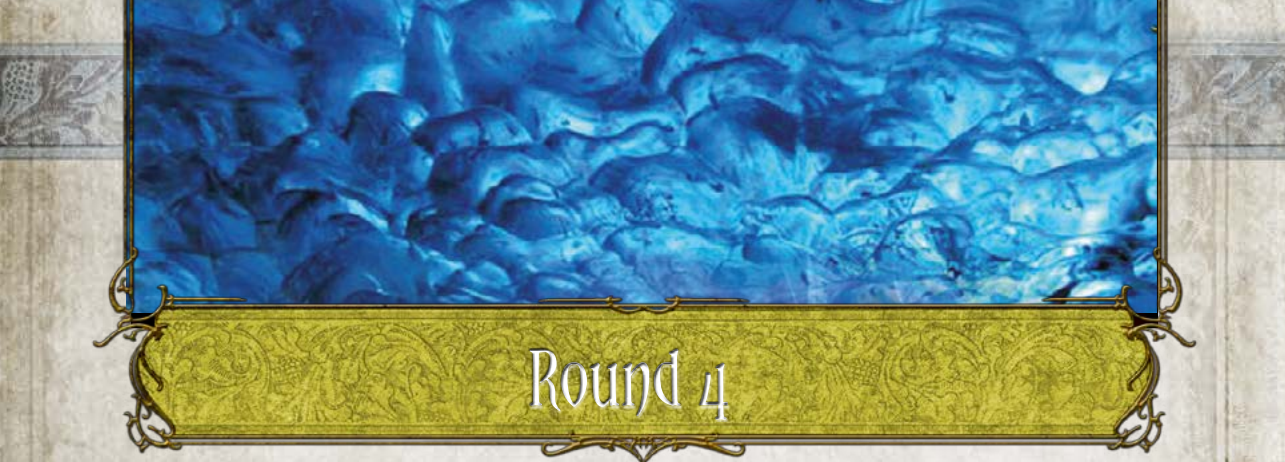
It is placed in your Attack zone where I pay 1 Resonance to activate it. Normally your Materia Binding of Mal-kuth would block this effect, but my Cellular Degeneration curse upgrades the Dissolve Tissue to Subtle, so once again my attack cuts through your Shield. You take an Essence Dmg, but I must place another charge on the Karmic Debt for casting an offensive spell.

End of Round 3 Summary:

The White Magi has 3 Essence and 3 Resonance.

The Black Magi has 4 Essence and 0 Resonance.





Round 4

Initiative Phase

Let's assume we rolled 5 so we each collect 2 Resonance, putting you at 5 Resonance and me at 2.

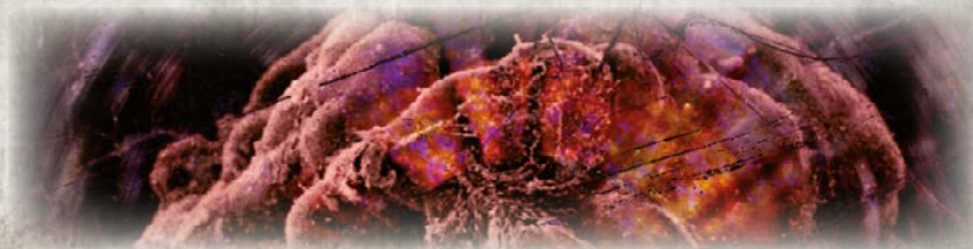
You gain initiative again, as usual. Matter Magi often have the advantage with Resonance, since many of their spells require components rather than pure energy.

Maintenance Phase

Beginning with the Attack zone, resolve all of the zones in order. There is nothing in our Attack zones, and your Defenses are either Persistent or Durability based, so nothing to resolve or countdown there.

The Curse zone always impacts before the Enhancement zone, so resolve my Cellular Degeneration now, by removing a Duration counter. Note that my Curse has a one-time optional effect that I can trigger by paying 1 Resonance and discarding the spell. I choose not to do this now, but I could choose to do it, even at the last moment before the final Duration counter is removed.

For my Curse zone I have nothing to resolve, since your Karmic Debt has a Persistent Duration and only provides a passive effect. Much like the Degeneration spell, it does not have an effect that impacts each turn.



Spell Preparation

The White Magi should prepare Purification and Air Essence.

And rather than re-attuning another Dissolve Tissue, I will prepare Cellular Augmentation and Beast Form.

Action Phase: Enhances and Abjurations

Cast your Air Essence spell.

I cast Cellular Augmentation.

This is placed in my Enhancement zone. Enhance spells grant you bonuses, Infuse you with energies, give you new abilities or empower your other spells. Cellular

Augmentation is primarily used as a base for more powerful Bio spells. I activate and place the right amount of Duration counters on this spell.

Magi only have FOUR Enhancement slots. If you cast a 5th Enhancement spell then one of your current Enhancements must be immediately discarded. This is the only zone with a limited number of slots.



Abjuration

Cast your Purification spell.

This spell is an Abjuration. Abjurations target OTHER spells instead of Magi.

Abjurations do not form a permanent bond with a spell card; they usually just perform a one-time effect and are discarded. In this case, Purification will Dispel my Bio Curse. When you successfully Dispel a card, it is immediately discarded.

Pay the costs and requirements (3 Resonance and discard one of your Matter Components). Purification activates and Dispels Cellular Degeneration. They are then both discarded.

I'm glad I did not waste Resonance re-attuning my Bio Attacks: without that Bio Curse, my Attacks would just hit up against your Shield.

To Cast & Sustain

For my 2nd Full Action I will meditate to gain 2 Resonance. You are out of Actions so you must pass. I, however, have Beast Form, a spell with the Free Action empowerment — I do not need a Full Action to cast it.

This costs 4 Resonance and has a new type of requirement: Active Cellular Enhancement on bearer to cast and sustain.

This means that in order to cast Beast Form, whoever will be the

bearer of it needs to also have an active Enhance spell with the Cellular descriptor. I have Cellular Augmentation, a Cellular Enhance spell. You can identify sub-types and other descriptors of cards in the aspect list. They precede all the other aspects of the card.



“To sustain” means if I do not have an active Cellular Enhance spell when resolving this spell during maintenance, Beast Form is discarded. So if you were to dispel

my Cellular Augmentation spell, I would have to discard Beast Form next maintenance phase or cast another Cellular Enhancement before then.

I place Beast Form in my Enhancement Zone, pay 4 Resonance to activate it, and then place Duration counters on it.

We have now both used all of our Full Actions. But I may take as many Free Actions as I have available, and Beast Form gives me a Free Action attack.



Aspect list
of Cellular Augmentation

FREE ACTIONS

You may take Free Actions before, between or after your Full Actions. When you take a Free Action, however, play continues to rotate clockwise — you cannot take a Full Action then immediately a Free



Action. Your allies and opponents go next. So, each turn rotation you may take one Full Action or one Free Action. Sometimes you may get lucky — your allies and opponents will be out of Actions, so then you do get to take yours back-to-back.

I will now use Beast Form's Free Action attack to cause you 1 Dmg. Beast Form deals 1 Physical Dmg. This is a form of 'weaker' damage that can be blocked by any Shield that blocks any of the Physical spheres: Bio, Matter, & Forces. In other words, if a Shield blocks a single Physical Sphere then it blocks Physical Dmg. So in general, Physical Dmg, is slightly easier to defend against.



Free Action
Icon

Materia Binding blocks all the Physical spheres, so it definitely blocks Beast Form's attack. Your Shield loses 1 Durability.

This attack is an offensive ABILITY, but not an offensive SPELL.

Because no spell was placed into one of your zones, it does not trigger Karmic Debt's effect.

The difference between an offensive Ability and an offensive Spell will also come into play when battling an Encounter. It will be discussed further in ACT II.

End of Round 4 Summary

The White Magi has 3 Essence and 3 Resonance.

The Black Magi has 4 Essence and 0 Resonance.

We are both at about half Essence, but the match is drawing to a close now that we are both set up to do quite a bit of damage.





Round 5

Initiative Phase

Bad luck for you, we roll another 10. That makes it more difficult to leverage your Resonance advantage. We each gain 5 Resonance.

Maintenance Phase

We check our Attack zones, then Defense zones then our Curse zones, then our Enhancement zones. This order is important to remember because it settles timing conflicts.

I remove a Duration counter from Cellular Augmentation and Beast Form once we hit the Enhancement zone.

Spell Preparation

You should prepare Acidic Matter and Judgement.

I will prepare Infernal Shot and Fireball, hoping to take you out this round.

Action Phase

You have initiative so begin by casting Acidic Matter on me.

Pay the Resonance, discard the Matter Component, then place Duration counters.

I lose 1 Essence, tying me with you.

On MY turn I will cast Infernal Shot to remove your Shield's last Durability, even though it requires me to pay an Essence.



I cast Infernal Shot now. Then Pay 1 Essence to activate.

This is blocked by your Shield so it is immediately discarded. But your Shield loses its last Durability counter, so it, too, is discarded. This opens you up to my Beast Form and Fireball, enough Dmg to destroy you.

Unfortunately, because I am beholden to the writer of this walkthrough, I forgot about Karmic Debt for a moment. I must take another Karmic charge because of the offensive spell I just cast. I am now in the danger zone because I have 3 Karmic charges and only 2 Essence.

You, White Magi should cast Judgement. Cast it now.

Place it in my Attack zone and pay its Resonance cost to activate it.



It impacts directly upon me doing Dmg equal to the number of Karmic charges I bear. The Karmic charges are discarded, leaving the Karmic Debt spell active. But it does not matter because I lose my last 2 Essence, and my mortal frame is shattered. In game terms I am now incapacitated and lose. In a team game, an incapacitated Magi cannot take any actions, collect or pay energy, or sustain Focus. Duration and Durability spells DO continue on in team games, however.



Congratulations! Walkthrough 1 is complete!

You have begun your journey to becoming a fully fledged Magi. But beware, now that you are awakened, you will draw the attention of the many forces that swirl unseen around mundane humans. You will be sought after by the Prime Consortiums, ancient cabals of Magi seeking to alter the world for their own ends. Horrors that seek our dimension will strive to use you as a gateway, and the Mutes (aka mundane humans) closest to you may begin to sense an unworldly aura about you and fear you. These will soon seem a small price to pay for Magick.

What happens next?

If this had been a real battle, then the dweomers in my Codex would have gathered my soul and collected it in the nearest sacred site to be reincarnated by my Cabal. That is the power of this age: the sacred sites have begun radiating with power not seen since before Babel. Despite this advantage, I would lose Avak'shar, which is a Sehimu Thinara word that means Honor or Authority. My soul would become more strained & tattered and my Cabal would have to expend resources and energy to reincarnate me to this time line.

Training Summary - Optional Empowerments Test

If you like, test your student on the following terms. If you are a White Magi exploring on your own, check your answers against the glossary.

Duration, Curse Duration, Durability, Free Action, Subtle, Bonded, Sustain, Offensive Action, Abjuration.

When you finish, continue to Walkthrough Act II.



A Magi uses his Will to perform an energy exchange

WALKTHROUGH TUTORIAL
ACT II

Now that you have begun to acclimate to your power, let us take your studies deeper into the mysteries of the Magi.

The black garbed master beckons you to follow him down a labyrinth of hallways that slant ever downward into a section of Bab'el unfamiliar to you. You begin to suspect that the tower may go as deep as it is high, if not deeper. Upon reaching a barred and warded gate, the master flips through his codex, and then Speaks in a sonorous voice that vibrates down the tunnel. The wards fade, the gate unbars and swings open.

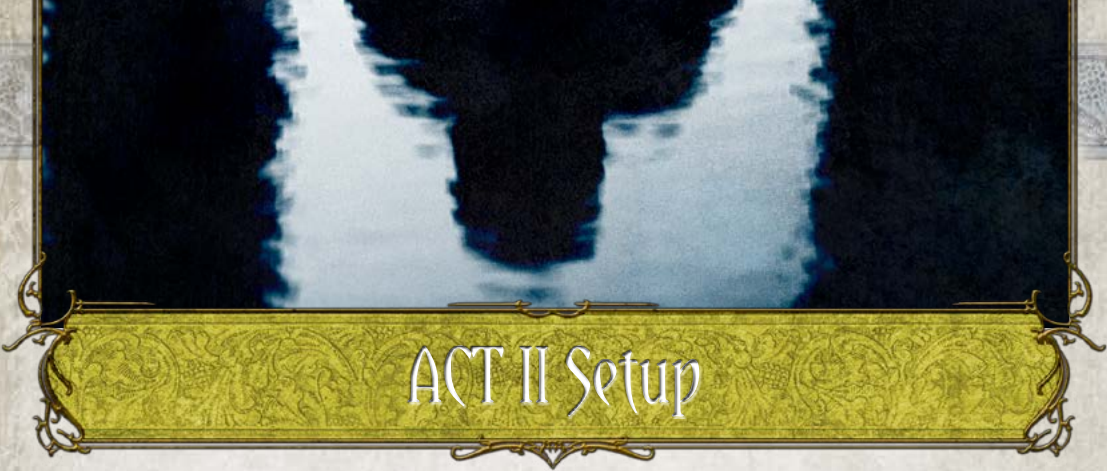
The walls beyond shimmer with a glass like surface. Shadows of forms seem to writhe beneath the tunnel's surface. Smokey runes shift as the two of you pass.

Most do not know that our Tower is built upon an older structure; you now walk within the truly ancient foundations. I have not been able to obtain memories of the time before. I suspect I may not have been there when the original tower was first laid. But, then again, memory of our other times can be fickle.

The two of you approach an alcove surrounded by dark runes that shift and curve as you stare at them. The master presses his palms to a series of runes and something shifts at the back of the alcove.

You are about to experience a true horror. A thing of shadow and Discord, brought into existence by misguided Magi of the past. It and its kind are the result of a series of corrupt Nam-shubs, powerful rituals that permanently alter reality. When these shadows are found they are often destroyed, but the one that lies within always returns. It is held contained within this bedrock. Today, you and I are going to confront this thing and destroy it if we can.

Prepare yourself.



ACT II Setup

Find the Codex page: Encounter - Sentient Shadow. Place it in a casting stand with the image side facing towards the two of you, or just lay it down on the table.

Re-Attune Spells

Return all discarded spells from the previous match to your Codex. This time, White Magi, be sure to include all of the level 1 Soul and Matter spells. I shall gather all of the level 1 Forces and Bio spells in my Codex. We may need them all to defeat the Shadow...

Reset Energies

Set your Energies to their correct starting positions:

Resonance 0

Harmony 0

Essence 12

Each Magi collects 3 green Will tokens.

Also gather a few of the very small Diamond counters to track Voice.



Collect Specializations

Specializations are memories of past lives that, when recalled, give the Magi a tactical advantage in the current battle. Each Magi may begin battle with one active Specialization. Specializations, aka Specs, may not be put into play once the battle begins. The Spec takes up an

Void Speaker



The Chant of Forms

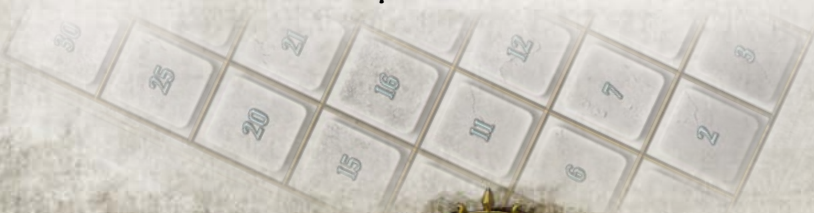


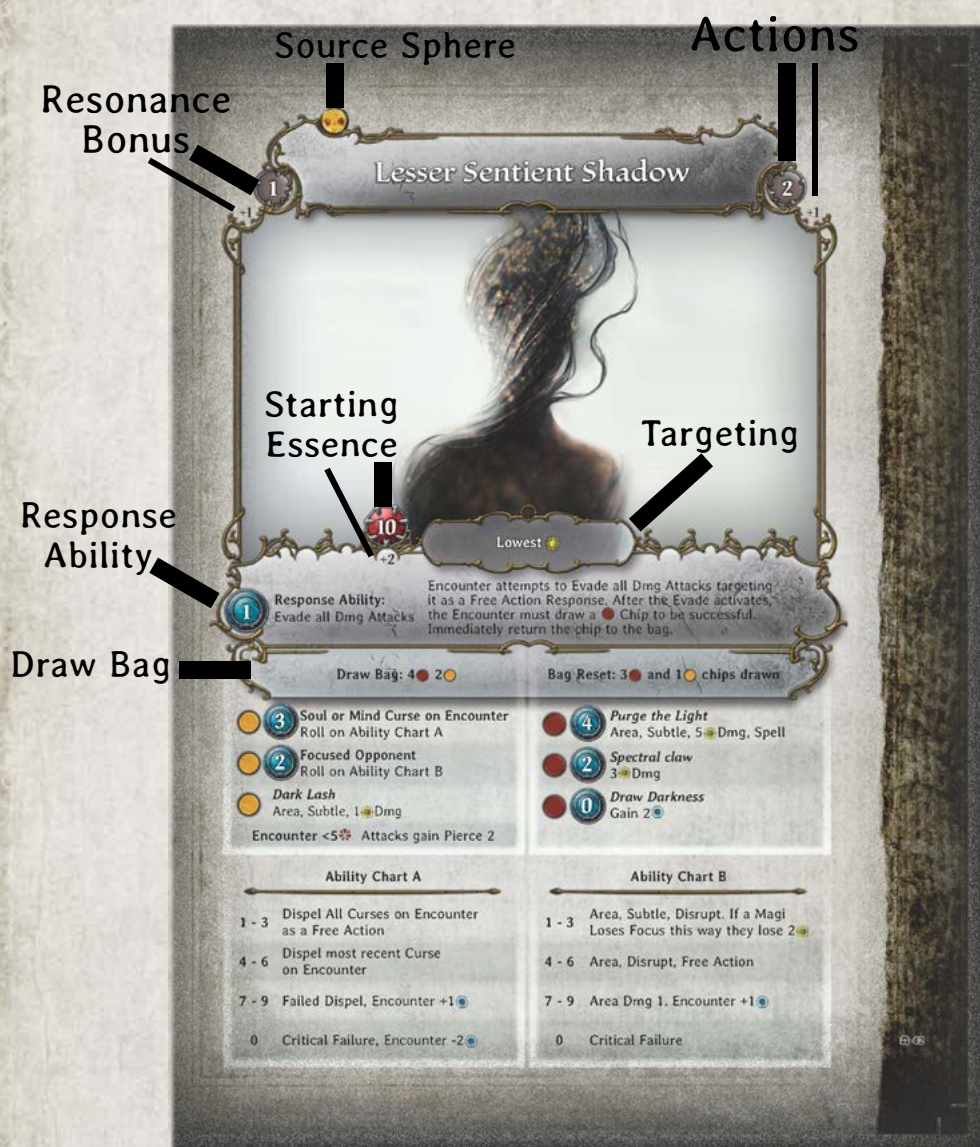
Enhancement slot. It can be voluntarily dismissed to open up the slot, but this is usually unwise. The White Magi should find and collect the Specialization **Void Speaker** and the Black Magi should take the **Chant of Forms**. Place these Specializations in front of you in one of your Enhancement slots. Magi begin with the Initiate ability active.

Setup Encounter Card

Now prepare the Encounter card (see next page). Begin by identifying its starting energies. The Shadow begins with 10 Essence and 0 Resonance. It does not have Harmony. If an Encounter does not start with a given Energy, that energy is always considered to be zero regardless of any effects that try to interact with it.

To track an Encounter's energy you can use any tokens you wish, or pull the Energy Tracker page out of your Codex, lay it on the table and place a blue counter on zero to represent its Resonance and a different colored counter on 10 to represent its Essence.





Encounter Cards

Encounter cards have a set of rules that govern their behavior. They operate much like a Magi: they have their own zones, collect Resonance from Resonance rolls, and have their own maintenance phase and actions. The only significant difference is that Encounters do not need to prepare their spells ahead of time.

It is good to familiarize yourself with the basic mechanics of an Encounter before you begin. The key points to begin with are its Draw Bag, Targeting Rules, Source Spheres and any Response abilities.

Assemble the Draw Bag: 4 RED 2 YELLOW

Place 4 red tokens and 2 yellow tokens into your bag of shadows, cup or other holder. When it is the Shadow's Action, you will draw one of these counters. Counters are left out of the bag until you fulfill the bag reset conditions. In this case, once you have 3 red and 1 yellow out of the bag, you return all of the counters back to the bag.



Targeting: Lowest HARMONY

This is the symbol for Harmony, one of the energies of all Magi not discussed in Act I. This targeting rule means that when the Shadow is doing a non-Area attack, it will target the Magi with the lowest Harmony. If its opponents are tied in Harmony then it will target randomly using the 10-sided die.



Source Spheres: SOUL



This means the Sentient Shadow's spells and abilities are by default considered Soul. This tells us the kind of Defense spells that are useful.

Response Ability: Evade all Dmg Attacks (Not in Easy Mode)

The Response abilities are always active and ready to engage according to their conditions. The Sentient Shadow will dodge away from any Attacks targeting it that have a Dmg aspect. This means each time the Shadow is targeted by an effect, we must check to see if it has Dmg in its aspect list. If it does then the Shadow will pay 1 Resonance to try to Evade the effect. After it has paid, it draws a counter from the bag to determine if its Evade was successful. Counters drawn to check Evades are immediately returned to the bag. We will begin this encounter in EASY mode however, so we will not be using its Response ability. Let us begin!



ACT II - Round 1

Initiative Phase

As always we begin with a Resonance roll. Let us assume we rolled a 10 so we can experience a Resonance Overload. This gains us 5 Resonance but we lose 1 Harmony each.

We set our Harmony dials to -1 by setting the left Harmony wheel to -0 and the right dial to 1.

The large number in the upper left corner of the Encounter card is its Resonance bonus. It says the Shadow gains an extra 1 Resonance on Resonance rolls. The Shadow thus gains 5 Resonance from the roll and an additional 1 from its inherent magick. The Encounter does not have Harmony so it does not lose any. Thus the Shadow has zero Harmony, which beats our -1, so it gets initiative. We are tied in all of our energies, so we roll dice to see who goes first. Let's assume I win the initiative.

The small numbers in the parentheses next to a stat is the bonus the Encounter gains for each additional Magi in the battle. We ignore these bonuses in 'easy' mode. Later, when you are ready to take on the Shadow at its full strength, we will adjust its Essence, Resonance roll bonus and its number of Actions to account for two of us opposing it. We will also enable its Response ability at that time.

Spell Preparation

Since it is the first round, we can skip the maintenance phase as there are no active cards yet to resolve. I will prepare Flame Form, Flame Eternae & Infernal Shot. For this round, you will actually only need to prepare Karmic Debt.

Action Phase

The Shadow prepares to lash out at us! It despises all that walks in the Harmony of the Weave and attempts to unravel their personal realities. We must be careful: while it is not an intelligent creature in the traditional sense, it is cunning and powerful.

Whenever it is an Encounter's turn, we must identify its action. We draw a counter from the draw bag and then match the color to its action charts. Beginning at the top of the corresponding chart, we check the action's requirements. If they are not met then we check the next action.

Let's assume you drew a red counter, so we consult the top red action. This action requires the Sentient Shadow to be able to spend 4 Resonance. It HAS 4 Resonance so it casts the spell Purge the Light. We know this action is a spell since it has the "spell" modifier.

Reduce the Shadow's Resonance to 2.

Response Phase

In Act I, we consistently skipped an important part of the Cast Cycle. Every effect, whether it is a spell or an ability, has a Response phase before it impacts. This is a time period when others can cast spells or activate abilities that have the Response empowerment.

We will have you cast a Response now. I know — you do not have any Response spells prepared. But Response spells do not have to be prepared. Any spell with the Response empowerment may be cast 'out of turn.' You declare that you are casting a Response by saying the word 'Fasul' (Fah-Sool). This is the Sehimu Thinara term for 'cut' or 'interrupt.'

Search through your level 1 Soul spells and find the Universum Negation. You are going to use this to dispel the Shadow's spell. Collect an interrupt stone and place it in front of you. Because you are taking an action 'out of turn,' the interrupt stone represents a time debt that you will have to pay off later. Some spells can be cast without incurring this debt, but Universum Negation is not one of them. If you already had two stones, you could not cast a Response that added to your time debt.

Dispelling The Purge

Universum Negation is an Abjuration, which means it targets other spells. Purge the Light has the “spell” descriptor so it is targetable. Note that Universum Negation requires a target manifesting spell. This means a spell that has not activated yet. Purge the Light has not activated yet so it is still considered to be manifesting.

Next, you must pay the spell’s costs. Normally this spell costs 3 Resonance to cast, but your Void Speaker initiate ability makes all Soul spells generate +1 Resonance when cast. Thus, YOU only pay 2 Resonance. Pay this now.

Now your Universum Negation also has a Response phase, in which I or the Shadow could cast more Response spells. But neither of us will do that so your spell now activates.

Your Abjuration impacts upon the Shadow’s spell and dispels it before it ever has a chance to activate. You have saved us a lot of Harmony Dmg! Your spell has no Duration so, its purpose achieved, it may now be discarded.



**Encounter abilities are not actually discarded when Dispelled.
They will be usable by the Encounter again and again.**

On my turn, I will upgrade my Specialization. Magi may upgrade a Spec by a single tier once per round as a Free Action. Magi can upgrade Spec trees in any order, but they must unlock a tree’s 1st tier before unlocking its 2nd tier. I will pay 4 Resonance and unlock the Tree A Tier 1 ability, making my Forces Shape-shifts cheaper and longer lasting.

This was a Free Action, but it uses up my turn. Now it is your turn.

Paying Off Interrupt Stones

Now it is your turn. But, because you have an interrupt stone, you must spend a Full Action to return it or take a Free Action. The stones mark whether you have already used your turn or not. You cannot take a Full Action until you have no interrupt stones left.



The turn rotates back to the Sentient Shadow. Draw another counter. Lets assume it is a yellow counter, so we consult the yellow chart. The top ability? No — there is no Soul or Mind Curse on the Encounter. The second ability? No — neither of us is a Focused opponent right now (a term I will explain shortly). So, check the last ability: Dark Lash. This has no conditions and doesn't cost Resonance, so the Shadow will take this action. Dark Lash causes 1 Subtle Area Harmony Dmg. Dmg by itself means Essence, but here, Harmony is explicitly noted. Area effects impact on the entire opposing team. And Subtle, you remember, bypasses Shields. We have no Defenses in place so we both take 1 Harmony Dmg. We both go down to -2 Harmony.



Back to my turn. I will cast Flame Form. My new Spec ability "Impermanent Body" makes my Forces Shape-Shifts generate +3 Resonance which makes this Flame Form 'free'. I also place 3 Duration counters onto it rather than 2 because of my new ability. Also because of my specialization's initiate ability, I did not have to spend a Full Action to cast this. This was a Free Action. As you can see, Specializations dramatically increase your power and efficiency.

Any Responses to my Flame Form, Mr. Shadow? No? Then my spell activates, and my body burns bright.

Act II - Round 1

Your turn. You have one action left. I hate to always tell you what to do. I will leave you free to make your own choices soon. But for now, use the last of your Resonance to cast Karmic Debt as those Karmic Charges will be useful for casting your Soul Shield: Karmic Binding of Protection— although note the Shadow will only incur Karmic Charges from its abilities with the “Spell” descriptor.

I want to cast Flame Eternae. I do not have enough Resonance to pay for it — but I have Will.

Will



Each Magi begins combat with 3 Willpower — Will for short. This represents their inner drive and magickal strength. You can do many things with the right application of Will. The most common is to perform an energy exchange, once per round, at any time, to instantly gain any one of 3 Resonance, 2 Harmony, or 1 Essence.

For Flame Eternae I exchange 1 Will for 3 Resonance and then pay the 4 Resonance needed.

Focus

Flame Eternae has Duration F. This means it must be maintained by Focus. Each Magi by default has one Focus Gem that represents conscious concentration to maintain a spell. In order to activate Flame Eternae, I must place my Focus Gem on it. To keep it going, someone’s Focus Gem must be on it at all times. An Ally like yourself can swap your Focus Gem in place of mine as a Free Action. If the Magi who is sustaining the spell gets Disrupted or casts another spell requiring Focus, the Focus Gem gets removed and the spell will be immediately discarded.



Focus Gem

Now we check for Responses to my Flame Eternae. This is a Dmg spell, so it would normally trigger the Shadow’s Response Evade, but not in Easy Mode. My Flame Form boosts this spell’s Dmg by 1, so the Shadow takes 2 Essence Dmg.

Everyone is out of actions except for me! But I am out of Resonance so I will use my last action to cast Infernal Shot. Now that I have Flame Form active this spell makes more sense. It has no Resonance cost, but requires a blood sacrifice of 1 Essence.

I pay 1 Essence. Note that Flame Form does not make me immune to this requirement. That makes me immune to Heat effects. 'Effect,' 'Requirement' and 'Cost' are different concepts.

The Shadow again has no Response. It takes 2 more Essence Dmg. I discard Infernal Shot since it has no Duration.

The Sentient Shadow should have 2 Resonance and 6 Essence.

The White Magi should have 0 Resonance, -2 Harmony & 12 Essence

The Black Magi should have 2 Resonance, -4 Harmony & 11 Essence.





ACT II - Round 2

Initiative Phase

The first round went well. Let's continue this combat with the Encounter at its full strength. No more Easy Mode! Recall that the big numbers on the Encounter stats are its strength fighting one opponent. For each additional opponent, add the small number to the stat. Since you are here with me, we add all those small numbers in one time.

First change: give the Shadow 2 additional Essence. For every additional Magi who joins the fight, an Encounter gains 2 more Essence.

Second change: increase the Shadow's Resonance bonus. Make the usual Resonance roll. Let's assume we rolled a 7 to give all of us 3 Resonance. But the Shadow has a 1 for its Resonance Bonus, and a +1 since you are here, which means a +2 bonus. The Shadow gains 3 from the roll plus 2 bonus for a total of 5 Resonance. It is now at 7 Resonance.

The Shadow gains initiative again -- it is eternally fixed at 0 Harmony since it lacks that attribute, whereas we are both slowly sinking into Discord. You and I are tied on all energies, so we roll dice to see who gets initiative between us. Let's assume you win initiative.

Maintenance Phase

Resolve all active spells, beginning with the Attack zones, then the Defense zones, then Curse zones then finally the Enhancement zones.

The only card in an attack zone is my Flame Eternae, so we must resolve that. Before it impacts I must pay for any sustain costs or discard it. I pay the 1 Resonance and enter its Response phase. Now that we are playing the Shadow in standard mode, we see if the Shadow can Evade

it. First, reduce the Shadow's Resonance by 1. Next, draw a token from the bag, note its color, and return it to the bag.

A red token means the Shadow Evades my Flame Eternae's Dmg this round. A yellow token means it loses 2 Essence. (Remember the extra Dmg I get from my Flame Form.)

Now resolve the other zones. There are no Defense spells. Your Karmic Debt is in its Curse zone, but it is a passive effect with nothing to update. We move on to the Enhancement zones.

In this zone, I resolve my Flame Form. I remove 1 Duration counter and pay 1 Resonance to sustain it. I am down to 1 Resonance. As you can see, Heat spells are potent weapons but expensive to maintain.

Spell Preparation

I will prepare Infernal Shot and Fireball. You should prepare Karmic Binding of Protection and anything else you choose. If you want to go more offense then consider prepping a Matter Component for Acidic Matter. I am beginning your transition from apprentice to colleague.

Action Phase

Another change now that the Encounter is in standard mode: increased Full Actions. The number in the parenthesis by Encounter's Action stat (top right) shows how many Full Actions the Shadow gets per additional opponent. There are two of us, so it gets $2+1 = 3$ Full Actions per round.

Draw a counter for the Sentient Shadow's Action. Let's assume it is another Red. There should be two red counters out now. It has plenty of Resonance to cast Purge the Light. Reduce its Resonance counter by 4. We have no responses for this so we each take 5 Harmony Dmg. Just as a reminder, we BOTH take Dmg from this because Purge the Light is an Area spell. Area attacks not only hit the entire opposing team but also have the advantage of being immune to Evades.

We each take 5 Harmony Dmg. We now both have -7 Harmony, otherwise known as 7 Discord.

Act II - Round 2

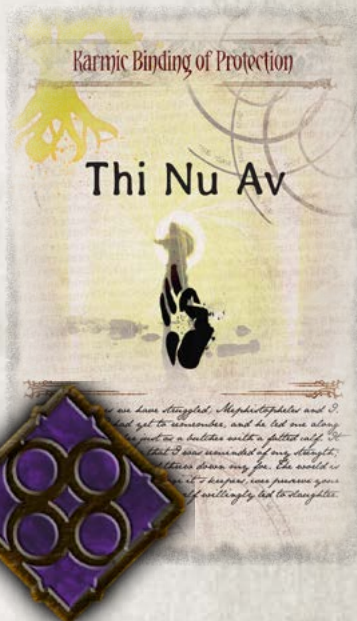
This was an offensive spell, so add a Karmic Charge to your Karmic Debt Curse.

Note: If the Shadow cast a non-Area Attack, it would have to choose just one of us to hit. Normally it targets the opponent with the lowest Harmony. Because we are tied in Harmony, the Shadow's choice would be decided by rolling a die. The player with the highest roll becomes the target.

You may go next. Now that you have a charge on Karmic Debt, I suggest you immediately cast Karmic Binding of Protection. Before you do, it is time to teach you about Voice.

Voice

Whenever you cast a spell, you may do so silently, as we have been doing. Your intent is sufficient to evoke the spell. Alternatively, you may verbalize your spell. Speak aloud the Sehimu Thinara word or phrase printed on the back of the spell — but without looking at it! This is called Intoning or Speaking a spell. When you choose to do this, you will gain Voice equal to the spell's fluency level.



Voice has two uses: Spec upgrades and energy exchanges. Voice can be spent as if it was Resonance to upgrade your Specialization. This provides a dramatic battle advantage — you have more Resonance for spells compared to Magi who do not learn their incantations. Alternately, you can perform an energy exchange with 10 Voice to obtain one of 3 Resonance, 2 Harmony, 1 Essence or 1 Will.

You can memorize your cast phrases or decode them on the fly. Decoding level 1 spells is quite easy and worth your time. Pull out the Serpent's Key page. Be sure to use the level 1 side with the short words spelled out on the spaces, not the single letter version. This is the Sehimu Thinara alphabet. Each word is the name of a single letter in the alphabet. On your spell, find the Serpent's Key glyph in the lower right section of your spell, and match the points on the glyph

with the positions on the Serpent's Key. Speak each letter's name, beginning with the circle endpoint and continuing to the bar endpoint.

As you are Speaking and looking at the front side of your spell, I can see the back side of the spell. I will monitor whether you Speak the Words correctly. If you succeed, I will say "Alum!" If you fail, I will say "Kotukh!"

Intone this spell now.

(As this is a training session, if the apprentice is unsuccessful, have them retry until they succeed.)



Vowels in Serpent's Tongue are pronounced like in Spanish.

- A like a in father, taco, ibekana — never as in mate
- E like e in bet
- I like i in machine, Akiko, macaroni — never as in mite
- O like o in hotel, taco, piano — not as in hot
- U like u in haiku, tiramisu — not as in mutt

The correct cast phrase for Karmic Binding is **Thi Nu Av** (sounds like *thee new ahv*). Hand Gestures are not required at level 1. They are just there to help you study them for later levels.

Act II - Round 2

Pronouncing Spells

Today I am forgiving of mistakes. The real world is not so kind. If you successfully Intone your spell, you gain the power of Voice. But if you miscast the spell, your opponents will know and say “Kotukh!”

When you miscast a spell, you return the spell to your Codex, unprepared. You also lose 1 Harmony. All other beings at the table, including your allies, gain 1 Resonance from the wash of unused energy.

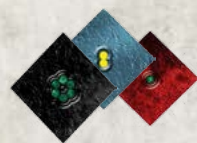
During your journey from Initiate to Master, remember to be lenient while judging other newly awoken Magi’s pronunciation of Sehimu Thinara. A full pronunciation guide is in your Codex.

Upgrades

Back to your cast. Place 1 diamond counter on your Specialization to represent your influx of 1 Voice. Place your new Shield in your Defense zone, pay its Resonance cost, and discard that Karmic Charge.

This spell has an optional upgrade noted by the caret ^ sign. You decide whether to buy an upgrade when you pay for the spell. This spell’s upgrade offers to add Refined to your Shield at

the cost of 3 Resonance — or 1 Will. Refined lets a Shield block Subtle Attacks. Since the Shadow has many Subtle Attacks I would pay the Will. You can optionally leave the Will counter on the card as a reminder that you upgraded it.



On my turn I will cast my second Infernal Shot. I will also attempt to Intone this spell.

Attempt to cast this using the level 1 Serpent's Key - hold it up towards the White Magi while casting and have them say Alum if you are correct. For Demo purposes you may try again if you are unsuccessful.

I place it in front of the Encounter and pay for it. This is a Dmg spell so the Shadow attempts to Evade by paying 1 Resonance and then pulling a token. If it pulls red, it evades — my Infernal Shot is discarded with no effect. If it is yellow then I cause 2 more Dmg. If this brings the

3 Soul or Mind Curse on Encounter
Roll on Ability Chart A

2 Focused Opponent
Roll on Ability Chart B

1 Dark Lash
Area, Subtle, 1 Dmg

Encounter <5 Attacks gain Pierce 2

Ability Chart A

Shadow down to below 5 Essence all of its attacks will gain Pierce. (See the upgrade on the yellow chart.) When a Shield blocks a Dmg spell with Pierce, the Shield only stops some of the Dmg and any secondary spell effects. The amount of Pierce indicates how much Dmg passes through the

Shield anyway. The Shield still loses 1 Durability even if all the Dmg bypasses the Shield.

Now it is the Shadow's 2nd action. We draw another token — let's assume it was yellow. Consulting the chart, it looks like the Shadow does not have enough Resonance for the top action even though it does bear a Soul Curse. It DOES have 2 Resonance left, however, and a Focused Opponent: me. So it pays 2 Resonance, and then rolls on Ability Chart B. Roll a 10-sided die and consult the chart. If the number rolled was a 1 - 6 then I will be disrupted. This is an Area effect, so your Shield will automatically block this Disrupt Attack and lose a Durability even though you are not using your Focus Gem. Shields do not pick and

3-4 3 Dmg
Draw Darkness
Gain 2

1-3 Area, Subtle, Disrupt. If a Magi
Loses Focus this way they lose 2

4-6 Area, Disrupt, Free Action

7-9 Area Dmg 1. Encounter +1

0 Critical Failure

Ability Chart B

Act II - Round 2

choose the attacks they block. They automatically block all offensive effects that they CAN block.

If I am Disrupted, my Focus is removed from any active cards and my Flame Eternae is immediately discarded.

If the die rolled was 1- 3 then the Black Magi also loses 2 Harmony.

Now it is your 2nd action. Cast whatever you wish to or upgrade your Specialization; either of the first tiers will be useful. You may spend your 1 Voice as if it was 1 Resonance, and you can pay 1 Will for another 3 Resonance. Note you can only perform one energy exchange per round. If a spell or ability requires Will directly, you can spend that as much as you want.

For my second action I can choose to do whatever I want, although I do not have a lot of Resonance so I will probably just meditate to gain 2 Resonance and 1 Harmony. ***(Feel free to do as you wish however.)***

Now that the Shadow has a third Full Action. We pull its last token. It is red. Consult the chart. If it has 2 Resonance then it will use the Spectral Claw against whoever has the lowest Harmony (if we are still tied then roll dice to decide the target). Your Shield will block this attack if it targets you. If the Shadow cannot use Spectral Claw then it will use the bottom ability to gain Resonance.

Now that 3 red counters and 1 yellow counter are out, the bag reset conditions have been met. Replace all counters back into the draw bag. If we have any actions left then we take them now.





ACT II - Round 3

Initiative Phase

Go ahead and actually roll for Resonance this time. Remember the Shadow gains +2 from Resonance rolls when challenging two Magi.

1-3 =	1 Resonance
4-6 =	2 Resonance
7-9 =	3 Resonance
10 =	5 Resonance

Initiative goes to the Shadow once again because it has the most Harmony (0).

Discord & Harmony Events

Now you will learn about one of the painful elements of Serpent's Tongue: the consequences of going too deep into Discord, which is negative Harmony. Most likely either one or both of us has 7 or more Discord. During the initiative phase, if you have 7 or more Discord then you must roll for a Discord Event. To do this, roll 2 ten-sided dice: if the result is LESS than your amount of Discord then you suffer a Discord Event. A Discord Event means an immediate, unblockable 3 Essence Dmg. (Note some scenarios or encounters may change the effects of a Discord Event.)

We must roll for Discord Events now, separately, if we have 7 or more Discord. If you roll under your amount of Discord then take 3 Dmg.

If you have 7 or more Harmony, you also roll. If the result is less than your current Harmony, gain 1 Will.

If you reach 20 Discord you are immediately incapacitated.

Maintenance Phase

Beginning with the Attack zones, resolve all Attack spells. If I was able to hold onto my Flame Eternae then I must pay 1 Resonance to sustain it or discard it. If I keep it, the Shadow will pay 1 Resonance to attempt to Evade it. Play this out using the sequence you learned last round.

Continue resolving all active spells zone by zone, paying for any sustain costs, triggering Responses, impacting their effects if they have one, and removing a Duration counters where applicable.

You have learned all you can from the Fluency 1 spells. There are three concepts that are only found on higher fluency spells: Ritual Paths, Transmutes and Allies. The Ritual Path is a series of four boxes across the bottom of the spells for upgrading. Transmute and Ally are the final two spell roles that we did not cover. When you encounter these things, consult the glossary for details.

This means it is time to set you free from my constraints as your mentor. Prepare whatever spells you think best so we may finish destroying this abomination. If the Shadow is already dead or dies this round, then reset everything including your spells and try defeating it by yourself from the very beginning!

If you have any questions on any game terms, consult the glossary or the reference manual or post your questions at www.BecomeMagi.com!

Good luck Magi! Welcome to the world of





Squads of Magi battle over a Sacred Site, a location of great power where spell inscriptions are created and powerful rituals known as Nam-Shubs are performed.



Quick Start Rules & Reference

Use this section to get a new Magi started playing Serpent's Tongue in as little time as possible! If you do not have an experienced Magi with you, we recommend starting with the Walkthrough instead.

Assemble Your Codex

A Codex may contain up to 27 spells. At most, five of them can be fluency level 3 and two of them can be fluency level 4. Lower level spells may be substituted for higher level as desired by the Magi. For any title of spell, only three spells may share that title. In addition, a Codex may contain one Specialization and one Artifact. Store your Artifact and Specialization in the front-most pocket of your Codex.

We recommend using one of the pre-built Codexes from our website for your first match. It's easier to build your own Codex once you have the hang of the game.

Setup

Use the Assembly Instructions at the beginning of this guide if you have not already. Before you begin a game of *Serpent's Tongue* take out your Specialization and Artifact and place them in front of you. Set your Energy Tracker to:

0 Resonance (blue)

0 Harmony (yellow)

12 Essence (red)

Collect 3 Will counters.

Energies



Resonance

Represents magickal power, how far you can bend Reality. Everyone gains the same amount of Resonance at the beginning of each round. It is used to cast spells and unlock Specialization Tiers.



Harmony

Represents balance and stability of reality. Used to cast spells and to upgrade spells. Harmony is the only energy that can go negative. Negative Harmony is called Discord. At either 7 Discord or 7 Harmony Magi will have to begin making Discord and Harmony rolls during the Initiative phase. Discord rolls can kill you, Harmony rolls can give you bonuses.

At 20 Discord, Magi are automatically incapacitated and lose the battle.



Essence

Basically your health. By default, matches are over once a Magi or team no longer has Essence.

Advanced Energies

Will



The willpower of a Magi to overcome obstacles. Some few spells require you to pay Will to cast them. For the most part, Will is used for upgrading spells and to perform an Energy Exchange. (See Energy Exchanges in Glossary)



Voice

For each spell a Magi intones (casts by speaking from memory the correct Sehimu Thinara phrase found on the back of a spell card while making the right hand gesture), the Magi receives Voice equal to the fluency level of the spell. Voice can be used to perform an energy exchange or to upgrade a Spec tier. (See Voice in Glossary for more information on this energy.)

Understanding Your Spells

Reference the image on the next page.

- (1) The Source Sphere. This dictates many card interactions and whether a defense blocks an attack.
- (2) The Card Title is the name of the spell. Only three spells of any single title, regardless of fluency, are allowed in one Codex.
- (3) The Role of the spell. The primary category of the spell determines what or who the spell can target. The basic roles are Attack, Defense and Enhancement.
- (4) The Empowerment bar contains visual representations of many key aspects. It is for quick-reference only, you can ignore it for now until you are familiar with the icons.
- (5) The Broadcast Bar shows key data for different spell types. For Defenses, it displays the Spheres which the Defense protects against. Other spell roles use it for data key to that role. It is made to be read from across the table.

Anatomy of a Spell

The only essential part to understand for now is the Energy Orbs, Aspect List & and the Rules Section.



(6) The cost in Resonance (the blue orb) and Harmony (the yellow & white square) of the spell. Red negative numbers signify how much must be paid to cast the spell. Positive blue numbers signify energy gained by casting this spell.

(7) The Aspects list tells you everything the spell is and does, and how it does it. It has three sections: descriptors, directives and empowerments. Descriptors have no default effect, they just synergize with other cards. Directives, in the red text are what the spell does (Dmg, Disrupt, Infusion, Siphon etc...). These occur whenever the spell 'hits'. Empowerments add benefits to the spell like Duration (makes it last longer) or Area (makes it hit more targets).

(8) Additional effects or Requirements (!) (see glossary) will be found here. Requirements, preceded by the ! are additional costs or conditions needed to cast the spell.

(9) Each spell Fluency 2 and higher has a Ritual Path that is used for upgrading the spell. At the cost of 1 Harmony per tier starting from

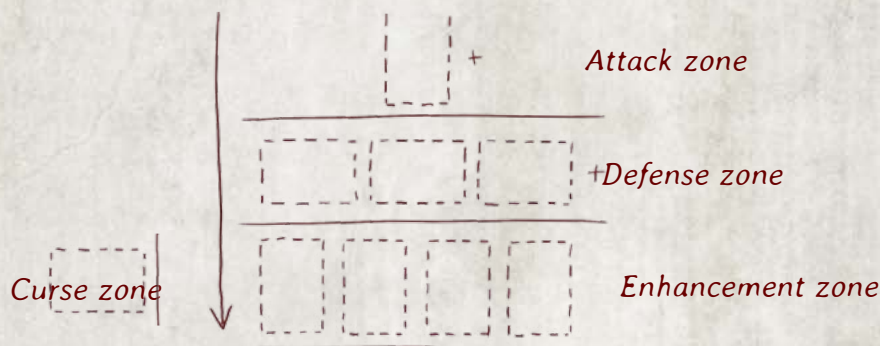
Quick Start Rules

the left one may unlock the additional listed effects. Or you may spend 1 Will for 3 tiers. On this card the first 2 tiers are empty but the third would provide one additional Duration. You must pay even for the empty tiers, so this upgrade costs either 3 Harmony or 1 Will.

(10) The Serpent's Key, used to puzzle out how to Intone the spell when you don't have it memorized.

(11) This indicates the Fluency level of a spell. Higher fluency means more power!

Zones



Zones are abstract areas on the table used to organize your spells and resolve impact timing. Each spell is placed into its appropriate zone as illustrated. Note that the Enhancement zone has only 4 slots while both the Defense zone and Attack zone can contain an unlimited number of spells. Play your Attacks into your TARGET's attack zone.

A Curse Attack is a special kind of Attack. A Curse Attack starts in the Attack zone, but if it successfully hits its target (not defended against) then it moves to the Curse zone — now behind a Magi's defenses! Any effects of the Attack after that point are unaffected by Defense spells.

Now that you understand the basics about energies, spells & zones, here is how the game actually plays.

Round Structure

Initiative Phase

a) Resonance roll — one Magi rolls the 10-sided die and consults this chart. Every Magi receives the Resonance bonus listed. If the roll is a 10, every Magi also loses 1 Harmony. (Resonance Overload.)

1-3 =	1 Resonance
4-6 =	2 Resonance
7-9 =	3 Resonance
10 =	5 Resonance

b) Initiative — Determine order for Magi to act this round. The Magi with the highest Harmony wins. Break ties with highest Resonance, then highest Will, then highest Essence, then highest die roll.

c) Check for Harmony and Discord Events — Discord is the opposite of Harmony. If you have negative Harmony then you have that much positive Discord. Each Magi who has at least 7 Discord or at least 7 Harmony at this time must throw two 10-sided dice. If the sum is less than the amount of Discord or Harmony the Magi possesses then...
... if they have high Harmony, they gain 1 Will.
... if they have high Discord, they lose 3 Essence.

Maintenance Phase

This phase is used to resolve any Duration-based spells that remain active. To resolve a spell means to pay any ongoing costs, impact the effect and remove a Duration counter, if it is the last counter then the spell is discarded.

Spells are resolved zone by zone starting with the zone farthest away from the players and then moving inwards. In most cases we can resolve our spells simultaneously, but in the rare case where it matters a player can insist that it be done by initiative.

a) Resolve all Attack zone spells

Quick Start Rules

- b) Resolve all Defense zone spells (includes Components)
- c) Resolve all Curse zone spells
- d) Resolve all Enhance zone spells.

Within each zone, resolve Global Area spells first, then Area spells, then individual Magi spells. Within a Magi's personal zone, the Magi who owns the zone chooses what order spells are resolved.

Spell Preparation Phase

Each Magi selects up to three spells to prepare (put in the front pocket of their Codex). These will be the only spells that they can play on their turns this round. You should pick spells without the Response empowerment to prepare. Responses may be played without preparation. Additionally magi may Re-Attune one spell during this phase at the cost of 1 + the Fluency of the spell they are Re-Attuning in Resonance. They may also Re-Attune an unlimited number of Bonded spells at a cost of 1 Resonance each.

Action Phase

Magi begin taking actions, Full or Free Actions, one at a time in the order determined during the initiative phase. By default Magi have 2 Full Actions per round and as many Free Actions as are granted to them by their spells and abilities. All spells unless stated otherwise consume 1 Full Action.

Cast Cycle

This is the order in which events take place when playing a spell. A Magi may never look at the back of their spells during a match. If you don't want to risk a miscalculation, skip Intoning and go straight to Placing and proceed from there.

- 1. Intone** (Optional) Hold the spell so that the back is facing your opponent (or facing your fellow Magi in team v Encounter) and speak the spell's cast phrase and perform the correct hand position and gesture, they will know if you have succeeded by looking at the back of the spell. Then your opponent will respond with "Alum" if you

Intoned the spell successfully or “Kotukh” if you were unsuccessful.

Miscast?

If you did not succeed in casting your spell you immediately lose 1 Harmony and all other beings at the table gain 1 Resonance. You do not lose an action. You do not pay anything beyond the 1 Harmony of a miscast. The spell goes back in your Codex, unprepared. The turn passes to the next being. If it was a Response spell you cannot cast any spell of that title again this turn (not round, just turn).

2. Place Put the spell into a zone appropriate to its spell role.

3. Pay Pay the cost of the spell including its energy **costs** \ **gains** found in the energy orbs, all (!) Requirements and any upgrades or ritual paths you desire.

4. Respond You and other magi may respond using spells with the Response empowerment — which trigger their own Response phase, continuing until no more Responses are cast. Response spells are the most complicated aspect of Serpent’s Tongue, so at some point, review Response in the Glossary.

5. Activate If its target is still existing and valid after the Response phase, the spell’s effect impacts now. If it does damage, deal it now. If it discards a spell, discard it now. And so on. See Glossary for “Dampen” for dealing with Responses that increase the original casting cost.



Quick Start Rules

Spells apply in the order they activate. Suppose Magi A casts Atomic Strike, a spell requiring “2 Actions” to cast, meaning it needs 2 Full Actions. Magi A casts Threnody to add Absolute Free Action to make the Strike a Free Action. Threnody activates. Then Magi B casts Prolong Cast. The Prolong Cast would now add a Full Action, returning the Strike to needing 1 Full Action. If Threnody and Prolong Cast were activated in reverse, the Atomic Strike would end as a Free Action spell.

Spell Types

Defense

Can only target self or Allies (including Koishaka)

Shields protect against spells and abilities sourced from the Spheres shown on the broadcast bar. A Duration-based shield will protect its bearer from all effects it can for the time it remains in play. A Durability-based shield will protect its bearer from one impact per Durability the shield possesses — the quantity of incoming Dmg is irrelevant.

Evades dodge a chosen offensive effect. You cast them as Responses. They can only dodge effects from specific Spheres. A successful dodge means the incoming spell does nothing. They cannot dodge Area effects.

Wards reduce Dmg you receive from impacts but offer no protection against any other effects. They only ward Dmg from specific Spheres.

Attack

Must target an opponent (or include opponent in Area)

Attack spells are used to attack your opponent in a variety of ways. Every spell is different!

Curses are special attacks. If you cast a Duration-based attack at a Shielded or Evading opponent, the Attack will stay active for its Duration and keep trying to penetrate the Defenses. A Curse on the other hand is discarded if its initial impact is blocked by an Evade or

Obey the text on the cards! An activated spell generally trumps the rule book! Most disputes about effects can be resolved just by reading each card and applying its effects one sentence at a time in order of activation!

Shield. Once on a being, the Curse is immune to all of that being's Defenses.

Enhancements

Can only target self or Allies (including Koishaka)

These give you new abilities. You have only 4 Enhancement slots.



Components

Can only target self

Are used to power other spells and are placed in the Defense zone.

Abjurations

Targets other spells and permanently modifies them.

The changes made by an Abjuration spell remain after the Abjuration is discarded. It is a permanent modification to reality. These dispel, add Duration, increase Dmg, etc.



Transmutes

Targets other spells and modifies them for some Duration. The effect of a Transmute is removed when the Transmute is discarded. If the modified spell is discarded, the Transmute is also discarded. If the modified spell goes Dormant, the Transmute also goes Dormant.



Ally

Cast to summon beings that behave like Magi working for their caster

These "witch's familiars" are commonly referred to by their Serpent's Tongue term Koishaka. They are affected by most of the same rules as Magi. They gain Resonance from Resonance rolls, have the same default of 2 full actions, possess the same zones as Magi and are discarded if they lose all their Essence. Instead of a Codex they have their own Special Abilities with which they serve their caster. Koishaka cannot meditate. The caster of a Koishaka has full command of its actions.



Specializations & Artifacts

Each Magi may begin battle with one active Specialization. Specializations, aka Specs, may not be put into play once the battle begins. The Spec takes up an Enhancement slot. It can be voluntarily dismissed to open up the slot. Magi begin with the Initiate ability. As a Free Action, additional abilities may be unlocked by paying the cost shown either in Resonance or in Voice. You must unlock tier 1 of a tree before tier 2, but you may unlock the two trees (A or B) in either order. Unless otherwise stated, all Spec abilities and upgrades **ONLY** affect spells the bearer controls or abilities the bearer activates.

As with Specializations, each Magi may begin battle with one active Artifact. Artifacts also may not be put into play once the battle begins. Each Artifact takes up one Enhancement slot. Some Artifacts have activation costs similar to spells; unless otherwise stated, these are activated as a Free Action. Unlike spells, these costs are always costs, never gains. Any passive abilities awarded by an Artifact are active as long as the Artifact remains in play. Most Artifacts may be dismissed as a Free Action.

Innate Actions

No effect that generally limits Magi Actions (Rage, Pacified, etc.) can ever prevent a Magi from performing Innate Actions. To limit innate Actions, the effect must name the Action specifically in its text.

Meditate (spend a Full Action to gain 2 Resonance and 1 Harmony)

Swap Focus (use Free Action to replace one Ally Focus with another)

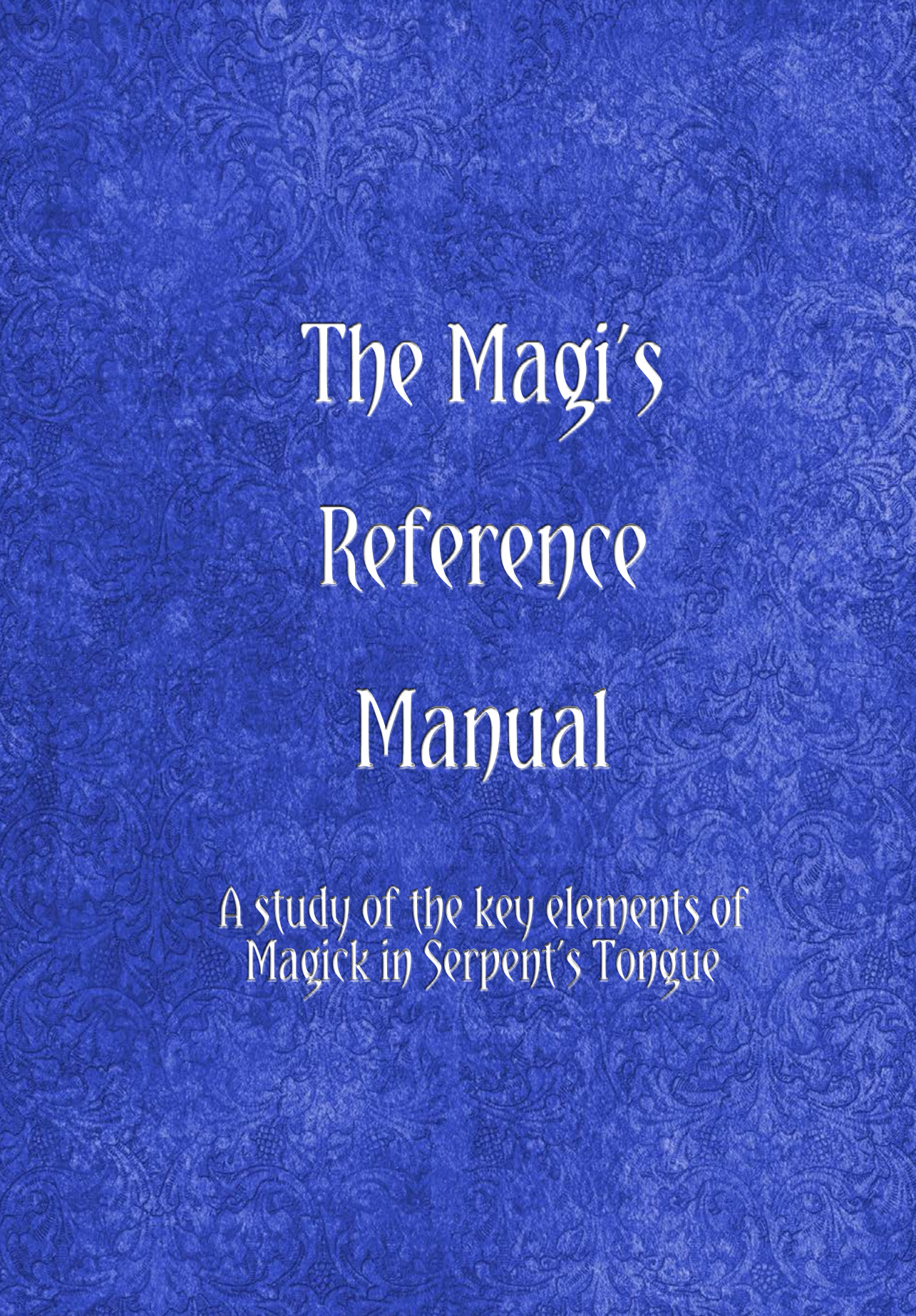
Shed Interrupt Stone (use Full Action to discard 1 interrupt stone)

Upgrade Specification (use Free Action+cost to unlock Spec tiers)

Dismiss (Magi may use a Free Action to discard a card they control unless the spell, Artifact or Specialization is specifically limited from being dismissed.)

End Note

Play continues until a full team is incapacitated, but you check for this victory condition only after the maintenance phase! Review the glossary for any other questions! Welcome to Serpent's Tongue!



The Magi's Reference Manual

A study of the key elements of
Magick in Serpent's Tongue

Allies – Human

Serpent's Tongue can be played solo or 1v1 but has been designed from the ground up to be played in teams. Human Magi may assist each other in several ways.

1. Swap Focus.

As a Free Action, Magi can place their Focus Gem on an Ally's spell with Duration F thereby freeing their Ally's Focus for something else. This transfers control completely to the Ally who is placing their Focus on the spell.

2. Upgrade each other's Ritual Paths

When you are paying for a spell, your Human Ally can choose to pay Harmony or Will to bolster your Ritual Path. Ritual Paths cost 1 Harmony per tier, or 1 Will for 3 tiers, regardless of who is paying for it.

3. Target each other with Defenses and Enhancements

Allies may cast Enhancements and Defenses onto each other. You are unable to cast these types of spells on an opponent. If an Enhancement has Area, it only fills the Enhancement slot of a single Magi, even though all Magi on that team are bearers of the Enhancement.

Allies – Spell (Koishaka)

These Allies are conjured via spells or abilities. They are referred to as Koishaka to easily distinguish a spell Ally from a human Ally. Some key points about Koishaka:

1. Koishaka come into play either to the right or the left of the caster, caster's choice. This becomes relevant in some mass combat situations.
2. By default they have 2 Full Actions every round, even in the round in which they first activate. In that first round, they have the lowest initiative. In later rounds, their initiative is determined just like normal Magi.
3. By default a Magi may only have one active Ally at a time. Activating or taking control of a second Ally will immediately discard the first.

The Cast Cycle – In Depth

Casting spells in Serpent's Tongue occurs in a particular order, and there are several key points to understand about using Response effects.

INTONE - The Magi can choose to Speak the cast phrase in order to gain Voice; otherwise skip this step.

PLACE - The Magi places the spell in its target zone or on its target card — in the case of abilities, which do not have a physical card to place, the target is simply declared. This immediately identifies whether the effect is offensive (placed in an opponent's zone) or not.

PAY - All **costs**, requirements, upgrades and ritual paths associated with the spell or ability are now paid and all **gains** are collected. This is the moment when an Action is actually spent.

RESPOND - Every Magi may now Respond with spells and abilities that have the Response empowerment. Responses can dramatically alter or impact the original spell; for example they can dispel it, change its target, increase its costs etc...

The caster has first priority to cast a Response; all other Magi have priority in the order they call "Fasul!" A spell cast as a Response must be fully resolved before returning to the original spell's Response phase.

Any spells cast as a Response also have their own Response phases as well, thus there can be a chain of spells cast as Responses.

Once all Responses have been activated (or dispelled), return to the original spell's response phase; now even more Responses may now be cast. Players may continue to cast Responses indefinitely.

ACTIVATE - Once there are no more Responses then the caster may choose to pay any additional costs or conditions created by the Response phase. If the additional costs cannot be paid or if the caster chooses not to pay, the spell is discarded. Then the spell's target is checked for validity. If the target is now invalid, the spell is discarded. Otherwise, the spell activates and impacts its effect upon Reality.

The Crucible Update

Some of the rules of magick have been altered in recent months. These rules differ from what is found in your Core Set's Rulebook. Here is a full list of the changes:

Optional Speaking\Gesturing When Casting

You can now cast any spell in your Codex without speaking its cast phrase; simply through force of will and intent! BUT, if you successfully Intone (speak) the cast phrase (and correctly perform the hand gesture) you gain the spell's fluency level in the new energy: VOICE. This 5th energy may be spent as if it was Resonance to upgrade your Specialization or be used to perform an 'Energy Exchange' (see glossary). The "Eloquent" aspect now requires that you attempt to speak that spell

Cast Cycle: Place, Pay, Respond, Activate

Magi now pay all the costs, requirements, upgrades and ritual paths after placing the spell, prior to its Response phase. Unless otherwise stated on the card, upgrades and ritual paths may not be purchased later. This simplifies the Cast Cycle tremendously.

Dismissing Manifesting Spells: Removed

Magi can no longer dismiss their manifesting spells (and with the new pay first system they seldom would WANT to). Dismiss is now a Free Action taken to discard an active spell you control.

Discord and Harmony Events Revised

These rolls are now only made during the initiative phase. The once-per-game first time roll when a Harmony or Discord threshold was crossed has been removed. Harmony Events now generate 1 Will. See "Discord Event" and "Harmony Event" in the glossary.

Dispel Effects Cause Refunds

Dispels now refund all negative costs and requirements associated with casting or upgrading the target spell. See "Dispel" in the glossary.

Energy Exchanges

Magi may perform a single energy exchange once per round, at any time, instantly. An energy exchange may be performed with 1 Will or 10 Voice. Regardless of the traded energy it nets the Magi 3 Resonance or 2 Harmony or 1 Essence. 10 Voice can also be exchanged for 1 Will.

Innate Actions

No effect that generally limits Magi Actions (Rage, Pacified, Phased, etc.) can ever prevent a Magi from performing innate Actions. To limit innate Actions, the effect must name the Action specifically in its text. Innate Actions are:

Upgrade a Specialization - Each Magi, once per round as a FREE Action, may upgrade a single tier of their Specialization. Both “trees” may be upgraded in any order, but tier 1 of a “tree” must be unlocked before that tree’s tier 2. This is no longer a Free Action Response.

Dismiss a Controlled Spell - as a FREE Action a Magi may discard a spell they control. Note: choosing to not sustain a spell is different than Dismissing it. See “Vowed” in the glossary.

Swap Focus - As a FREE Action a Magi may place their Focus onto an active spell and remove an Ally’s Focus already present.

Meditate - As a FULL Action, gain 2 Resonance and 1 Harmony.

Shed Interrupt Stone - As a FULL Action, discard 1 interrupt stone

Re-attune only during Spell Preparation

Re-attuning spells now only takes place during the spell preparation phase. Previously it also took place during maintenance.

Sustain costs paid and checked in maintenance

Any ‘to sustain’ requirements are only paid for or checked when resolving the effect during the maintenance phase. Previously some types of ! Active [spell] to sustain requirements would immediately discard the spell if the condition was ever absent. Duration F spells are still immediately discarded if they lose Focus

Zone by Zone Resolution

During Maintenance, all Attack zones are resolved before resolving all the Defense zones, then all the Curse zones, and finally all the Enhance zones. Previously a single player resolved all their zones before moving onto the next player. Now it is by zone, to create a more fair environment and to speed game play. The zone’s owner chooses which spell within a zone to resolve first. While resolving a type of zone, players can often resolve spells simultaneously to speed game play, but in the case of the ultra-rare timing conflict a player may insist on resolving a zone in order of initiative.

The Crucible Update Continued

Misc. Errata

Small changes to empowerments and terminology:

Starting Essence: 12

Begin combat with 12 Essence instead of 10.

Add Dmg X

Add Dmg X and +X Dmg now mean exactly the same thing. Previously, +X Dmg only applied to spells that already dealt damage.

Backlash

This spell empowerment causes Harmony Dmg to the controller of any Abjuration or Transmute that targets this spell, even if it is controlled by the caster of the Abjuration or Transmute.

Haste & Slow effects no longer stack

Offensive effects that give interrupt stones no longer stack, the target can only receive one interrupt stone per round from an offensive effect. Magi may not stack effects that give extra actions regardless of whether its voluntary or offensive.

Wards no longer stack

Wards are no longer cumulative. If a Magi has 2 Wards that both mitigate 1 Bio Dmg, the Magi only mitigates a total of 1 Bio Dmg.

Changes to Upgrading Specs

Spec tiers can only be upgraded as Free Actions, not Free Action Responses. One Will no longer buys an upgrade. Will must now be exchanged for Resonance before it may be used to buy an upgrade at full cost. Voice may be used instead of Resonance at 1-for-1 rate.



Voice:

The Fifth Energy of Magi



The Glossary

Abjuration Spell

A type of spell that targets and modifies other spells. The effect of an Abjuration spell remains after the Abjuration is discarded. It is a permanent modification. If an Abjuration spell has Area, that means it targets all validly targetable spells for all Magi of a given team.

Ability

Abilities are special actions granted by spells, Specializations and Artifacts. They operate exactly like spells except that they cannot be targeted by Abjurations, Transmutes and other effects that specifically target spells. Otherwise when the rulebook references behaviors of spells, it is also referring to abilities. To be clear, the ability cannot be targeted by Abjurations and Transmutes, but the spell that grants an ability CAN be targeted. For example, the spell Beast Form grants its bearer the ability to cause 1 Dmg each round as a Free Action. The Beast Form spell can be Dispelled, but not the ability's Dmg effect when it is activated. Activating Beast Forms Dmg ability does not count as a manifesting spell. Some abilities explicitly describe themselves as "spell," thus making them targetable.

Absolute Free Action

See "Free Action (spell aspect)."

Action

There are two different kinds of action: Full Actions and Free Actions. Magi have two Full Actions per round. Typical actions include casting a spell, meditating, dismissing spells, activating abilities, etc. Regardless of whether a Magi takes a Full or Free Action, the Magi's turn ends, and play shifts to the next being. See "# Actions," "Free Action," and "Full Action."

A Magi has 2 Full Actions per round. Effects may increase or decrease the number of Full Actions a Magi has each round, but there are limits.

Effects that add additional Full Actions per round DO NOT stack. In other words, a Magi may gain AT MOST one additional Full Action each round regardless of how many effects try to add one.

Effects that force their target to collect an interrupt stone do not stack IF the effect is offensive. In other words, opponents may only cause a Magi to lose at most one Full Action each round. Even this single loss is prevented if the Magi already has 2 interrupt stones. On the other hand, effects from the Magi or Magi's Allies may cause the Magi to collect more than one interrupt stone per round. The Magi may also gain interrupt stones by casting Response spells that 'borrow' time against the future, but once they have 2 interrupt stones, they are not able to cast more Response Full Actions.

Actions

A requirement indicating that a spell requires “#” Full Actions to cast. The spell is Spoken then placed in the Rite zone until the Magi has enough Full Actions invested into the spell, at which time the spell is treated like any other just-Spoken spell: choose target, pay costs and handle Response phase. A spell that has Action requirements added to it (via a spell such as Prolong Cast) moves into the Rite zone (and may be re-targeted when it emerges). Thus it is possible for a Magi to have multiple spells in the Rite zone simultaneously. The Magi may use the next Full Action to fulfill any one of those spells. If the player takes a Full Action for anything (including clearing an interrupt stone) other than advancing a Rite zone spells, all spells in the Rite zone are discarded. A player may take Free Actions without triggering this discard. If the Magi is Disrupted, discard all spells in the Rite zone.

Action Phase

The fourth of the four phases of a round. During this phase, Magi take turns (in initiative order) taking actions including activating effects, casting spells, meditating and other abilities granted to them throughout the battle. By default Magi have 2 Full Actions per round.

Active

A spell that has been successfully cast; i.e. paid for and activated and is not yet in the discard pile. Spells in a Codex or in the discard pile or still manifesting or Dormant are never active. When a spell is fulfilling a casting requirement, it must always be active. Note: Magi spells and abilities may only target active spells unless the spell or ability explicitly states to target some other state. See also “Dormant,” and “Manifesting Spell.”

Activate (Manifesting Spell)

To finish the cast cycle of a spell after its response phase ends. Activation begins by checking that the target and caster are still valid (if not, the spell is discarded; abilities just fail). See “Dampen” for handling added activation costs. Upon activation, the spell's effect (as determined by the directives in the aspects list and any rules text) impact immediately. For example, “Dmg 1” deals 1 damage upon activation, and “Will Infusion 1” heals 1 Will upon activation.

Activate (Spell, Specification or Artifact Ability)

To declare and pay (if necessary) for the use of an spell ability or Artifact. Once declared and paid for, the effect gets a Response phase. After the Response phase, the effect activates (unless canceled by a Response).

Adamant Empowerment

An empowerment that makes a spell immune to abilities, Abjurations and Transmutes that target it UNLESS they have the Inexorable empowerment OR they are cast by the spell's controller. Adamant effects can still be Evaded, Shielded, and Warded. If a spell gains Adamant after already being Transmuted, the Transmute remains in effect.

Add Dmg X or +X Dmg

Adds a Dmg aspect to a spell or increases an existing Dmg effect. By default, Dmg means Essence, but other energies may be specified. If a spell deals Dmg in any way (including from Transmutes applied to it) then it has a Dmg effect and the extra Dmg is applied to that effect. For example, Gestation which does 3 Dmg at the end of 3 rounds, would be increased to 4 Dmg at the end of 3 rounds. If a spell does not inflict any Dmg at all then when it gains Dmg it gains the Dmg aspect and will apply its effect like a normal Dmg directive, upon activation and each maintenance phase thereafter.

Ally Spell

A type of spell used to summon a new Ally to fight at the Magi's side. Unless otherwise specified, a Magi may control only one Ally at a time. An Ally has 2 Full Actions per round, including the round it first activates, unless otherwise specified. In its first round it has lowest initiative; later rounds it computes initiative like other Magi. It is placed either to the left or right of the caster. Gaining control of a second Ally discards the first. These summoned Allies are known as Koishaka to distinguish from human Allies. The Magi who summons a Koishaka is its controller. A Magi who casts an Ally Spell must be the initial controller of that Koishaka; Magi cannot summon Koishaka on behalf of other Allies or opponents.

Ally (Magi type)

A Magi on the same team. Allies may be human or Koishaka (meaning summoned by Ally spells). Area spells affect a Magi and that Magi's Allies. See rules for details of Ally interactions.

Area

An empowerment indicating that a spell's effect will impact an entire Team. Area spells are positioned between Magi on a single team. Area attack effects can impact directly on one Magi while being blocked by another if only one

member of the team has Defenses. Area Defenses defend the whole team. Area Enhancements provide a bonus to a whole team but only fill an Enhancement slot of a single member. (Place the Enhancement in that player's Enhancement zone.

Area effects cannot be Evaded. See "Area Curses" for special rules of Curses with Area. See "Area:G" for information on Global Area spells. Special optional rules for Area apply when there are 3 or more humans on a team. See detailed rules.

Area is meaningless on Ally, Component, and Transmute spells. If an effect adds Area to these spells, it does not change the operation of these spells.

Area:G or Global Area

A modification of the Area aspect meaning that a spell hits the global area, which includes all Magi (includes Koishaka and Encounters) involved in the battle. Global spells are placed in the center of the battle arena. Because Global effects are in every being's zone, they are automatically offensive (because they are cast into an opponent's zone by default). Global Attacks impact all Magi, though team Defenses and individual Defenses may protect against that impact. A Global Abjuration would impact all active spells, again, taking Defenses into account. Ally spells cannot have the Area empowerment.

Area Curses

A Curse spell with the Area aspect. An Area spell affects all Magi, but a Curse only affects Magi that it impacts. This makes Area Curses complicated. An Area Curse will attempt to impact all Magi in the zone it targets. It may hit some Magi. Other Magi may avoid it with Evades/Shields. Those Magi that are hit are now affected by the Curse for however long its Curse Duration lasts. You may need to track which humans or Koishaka are actually affected by the Curse by placing one of the included player markers to represent which Magi is Cursed. Dispelling the Curse frees all Magi.

Artifact

A magickal device that has spell-like powers. It is generally more potent than any single spell but of limited and specific use. Artifacts are stable by themselves but unstable in combination which is why Magi generally may only carry a single Artifact at any time. Artifacts, like Specializations, are active at the start of the battle and cannot generally be activated after combat begins. Artifacts take up an Enhancement slot but can be dismissed as a Free Action. Some Artifacts have a passive ability that affects the Magi that owns it. Others have charges. Magi must expend the energy to activate the Artifact. Unless otherwise noted, such activation requires a Free Action.

Aspect

A keyword of a spell or effect. A spell's inherent aspects are listed out in the aspect list at the top of a spell's rules section. Aspects include descriptors, directives, and empowerments. Descriptors, if any, are listed first in black boldface; other spells may reference spells with particular descriptors. Next, directives are any aspects shown in red text; these occur upon activation and again in each maintenance phase for as long as the spell is active. The remaining black text aspects are empowerments; these describe extra powers or limitations on the spell. Spell aspects may be added, removed or modified through the spell's own rules text or through Abjurations, Transmutes or abilities. The Rules section always trumps the aspect list. For example, a spell could have "Dmg 1" and "Duration 3" and text stating that it impacts Dmg only on the first round. Such a spell would only impact Dmg on the first round, even though the default behavior for "Dmg 1" would be every round.

See "Descriptor," "Directive," and "Empowerment."

Attack Spell

A type of spell that tries to harm one or more opponents. Attack spells are placed in the targets' Attack zone. Once activated, they attempt to impact on their target. Magi must include an opponent when targeting an Attack spell. Spells that have multiple targets may target the Magi or Magi's Allies only if an opponent is included in the targeting (a Magi may be targeted even if Shields or other Defenses will stop the actual impact).

Attack Zone

The zone farthest away from the Magi where opponents place Attack spells. Duration-based spells remain in the Attack zone and attempt to impact on the target each maintenance phase. Spells in the Attack zone may be blocked by the target's Defenses. See Zones.

Attunement

A spell requirement that a caster must have at least one spell of the specified Sphere in his\her discard pile when paying for the spell. A Magi who cannot meet this requirement cannot cast the spell. Compare with "Dominance."

Avak'Shar

A measure of a Magi's commitment to magick that may be leveraged to acquire more powerful spells. Serpent's Tongue awards Avak'Shar ranks in many forms: as codes in Inscription Packs, as recognition for participation in the online forums, and as rewards for winning tournaments. Your Codex holds clues to finding more Avak'Shar. These ranks may be exchanged for free spells. Some spells are not available no matter how many boxes you buy... you must earn them through Avak'Shar!

Awatum

The written form of Sehimu Thinara. See “Sehimu Thinara” for details.

Backlash

An empowerment indicating that a spell imposes a Discord penalty if Transmuted or Abjured. When a Transmute or Abjuration successfully impacts upon a spell with Backlash, the controller of the Transmute or Abjuration takes Unblockable Harmony Dmg equal to the Backlash rating. The Discord penalty is part of the spell impacting; there is no separate response phase triggered. An Abjuration with Area will trigger Backlash Dmg from every Backlash spell in the Area (Transmutes do not have Area). Magi take Backlash Dmg even when Abjuring or Transmuting their own spells.

Banish

To remove a spell from the battle entirely. Banished cards can not be re-attuned even if they are Bonded. They are out of the battle unless some other spell or effect explicitly brings them back somehow.

Bearer

The Magi whose zone an incantation is currently in. The bearer is the recipient of the spell’s effects. Compare with “Target.”

Bonded

An empowerment of a spell indicating that the spell does not count against the “1 re-attune per round” limit and only costs 1 Resonance to re-attune. See “Re-attune” for details.

Burn Focus

To discard a Focus. Magi with more than one Focus only have to discard 1 Focus to pay a Burn Focus cost. The discarded Focus is unavailable for use to sustain spells. The Focus does NOT have to be currently sustaining a spell to be Burned. An unlimited number of Burned Foci may be re-attuned during spell preparation by paying 1 Resonance for each one.

Cast Cycle

The sequence of casting a spell, which consists of Speaking, Placing, Paying, Responding and Activating. The phrase “I cast the spell” generally refers only to the first three, Speaking, Placing and Paying.

Caster

The Magi that successfully spoke a particular incantation. Unless otherwise specified, a spell’s caster is also its initial controller. If a spell is returned to a Codex, that is always the Codex of its caster. Always.

Charge

A token used to track the number of activations remaining in an Artifact or the strength of some spell effects. Charges come in various types. For example, Karma is tracked using Karma charges.

Cloaked

A Magi state of being where in the Magi is hidden from attackers. If a Magi is Cloaked, opponents cannot target the Magi. Spells controlled by that Magi can still be targeted. Cloaked Magi are still affected by Area spells.

Codex

A magickal artifact for containing Incriptions. Incriptions are the source of magickal power; a Magi is the catalyst for unlocking them. Incriptions are unstable if simply piled together with other Incriptions — they harmonize and create freak storms of magickal power. A Codex is an artifact specifically crafted to keep each Inscription bottled up in its own pocket.

A standard Codex may contain at most 27 spells. Only 5 of these can be fluency level 3, and only 2 can be fluency level 4. Lower-level spells may be used in place of higher-level spells if desired. Only 3 spells of the same title may be included, regardless of fluency level, i.e., a Magi may only include 3 Karmic Debts even if one is level 1 and the others are level 3.

Combination aka “Requires: Combination with...”

To apply a Transmute to a target spell. Once combined, if the target spell is discarded, all spells combined with it are also discarded. The Transmutes may be discarded without discarding the target spell. See “Transmute Spell.”

Component Spell

A type of spell cast to fulfill requirements for other spells. The other spells may require “Active” Components of a particular type, indicating that the caster just has to control one of those Components. Some spells require that the caster discard the Component as part of the casting cost. Component spells are placed into the caster’s Defense zone behind any Shields and Wards. You cannot cast Components into the Defense zones of opponents. Casting a component into an Ally’s Defense zone does not transfer control to them (but the Component would be protected by their Defenses, not yours.)

Controller

The Magi that has current authority over a card. Only the controller has the ability to voluntarily Dismiss a card and is responsible for paying any sustain costs. The spell’s caster is its default controller, although control can be shifted by various effects.

Counter

A token used to track various aspects of a spell. Counters come in various types. For example, Duration is tracked using Duration counters. This term is effectively synonymous with “charge,” “chip,” or “token.”

Curse

A special type of Attack. Once a Curse successfully impacts on a target, it is moved behind their Defenses and placed horizontally in the Curse Zone. Successfully impacted Curses are no longer affected by Defenses and remain for as long as they have Curse Duration. Curses resolve before Enhancements in maintenance phase. The effects of a Curse are described in its rules text. See also “Curse Duration” and “Area Curse.”

Curse Duration

An empowerment indicating the duration of a successfully impacted Curse. Curse Duration counters are not placed on a spell until after it successfully impacts on its target (i.e. is not defended against). See “Curse.” Curse Duration can come in all the same flavors as Duration. See “Duration.”

Dampen

An effect that requires the caster of another effect to pay additional energy. The Dampen text will indicate which energy and by how much. When a spell is Dampened by a Response, its controller must immediately choose to either pay the additional costs or else discard the spell (no refund as this is not a Dispel).

Defense Spell

A type of spell intended to protect the Magi from harm. Defenses come in three flavors: Shield, Evades and Wards. Shields may block all offensive effects (including Attacks, offensive Transmutes/Abjurations, and offensive abilities) but are bypassed by effects with Subtle or Pierce empowerments. Evades dodge targeted effects but cannot avoid Area effects. Wards do not block or dodge effects but rather just reduce Essence Dmg (by default — some Wards do reduce other types of Dmg or Spell Loss). All Defenses protect the Magi and spells in the Magi’s Defense zone, Enhance zone, Codex and discard pile. Shields even protect themselves (so a Soul Shield cannot be Dispelled by a Soul Dispel). You cannot cast Defense spells into an opponent’s Defense zone. Only a Defense with Area:Global can ever affect opponents.

Defense Zone

The middle zone where Magi place their Defense and Component spells. Magi may cast nothing except Transmutes and Abjurations into an opponent’s Defense zone.

Descriptor

The aspects optionally at the start of a spell's aspect list in bold face indicating a particular sub-type of magick, like Heat, Chaotic, Karmic, etc... Not all spells have a descriptor. Descriptors do not in and of themselves change the spell behavior in any way. Other effects may reference and effect all spells with a given descriptor. For example, a Specialization might lower the casting cost of all Temporal spells. Temporal is a descriptor. There is no complete list of all possible descriptors.

Directive

Directives are written in red in the aspect list and identify what the spell does by default. They include but are not limited to: Dmg X, Dispel, Disrupt, Infuse X, etc. Directives often make up a spell's entire effect, but additional rules may be supplied on the card that add to the spell's effect.

Discard

To remove a card from the field and set it aside in a pile. See "Re-attune" for details on restoring a discarded spell to its caster's Codex.

Discord

The inverse of Harmony. When you have negative Harmony you are said to be in Discord. Gaining 1 Discord is synonymous with losing 1 Harmony and vice versa. Discord is dangerous. It opens a Magi up to the shredding of body and soul — see "Discord Event" for details. If a Magi reaches 20 Discord, he or she is immediately incapacitated. See also "Shed Discord."

Discord Event

Punishment for a Magi causing too much stress on Reality. Magi make a Discord roll each initiative phase if they have 7 or more Discord. A Discord roll uses two 10-sided dice. If the sum is less than the Magi's current Discord, they immediately suffer a Discord Event. Every Discord Event is an immediate, unblockable, nontransferable loss of 3 Essence. (Some scenarios and encounters will change the effect.)

Dismiss

An innate Action of Magi that allows them to voluntarily discard a spell, Artifact or Specialization they control as a Free Action. Manifesting spells cannot be dismissed. Anything with the Vowed aspect cannot be dismissed.

Dispel

A directive that forcibly removes an active or manifesting spell — the spell with this directive will specify active, manifesting or both. Dispels will also specify whether the target spell is discarded, banished or returned to its

owner's Codex. Regardless of where the target spell ends up, if that spell was manifesting, its caster gets a refund of 1) all negative energy casting costs, 2) upgrade costs, 3) ritual path costs. The Magi need not pay back any positive casting costs. Any spells (i.e. Matter Components) or charges (i.e. Rifts) sacrificed as part of the Requirements are restored. Spells that had left play are brought back to active as if they had just come back from being dormant, along with any Transmutes that may have been attached to them.

Encounters are an exception. If an Encounter's spell is Dispelled, the Encounter does not get a refund of the lost energies. This balances the fact that Encounter's do not actually discard their spells and abilities.

Disrupt

A directive that forces the impacted Magi to immediately discard all Duration F spells that are sustained by that Magi's Foci and discard any spells in that Magi's Rite zone. "Disrupt" may appear as a directive in the aspect list indicating that when that spell impacts, it Disrupts the targeted Magi.

Dmg

A directive to subtract energy from a Magi. Dmg by itself always means loss of Essence. Subtraction from other energies will be specified. For example, "Resonance Dmg 1" means to subtract 1 Resonance from the damaged Magi. See also "Effect."

Dominance (Sphere)

A spell requirement that caster must have more spells from the named Sphere in his/her discard pile than of any other Sphere when paying for that spell. Magi who cannot meet this requirement cannot cast the spell. Dominance requires the named Sphere be the largest minority, not the majority, of the discards. Compare with "Attunement."

Dormant

Indicates a spell that was active but temporarily is not. A Dormant spell continues to countdown Duration. Its controller must continue to pay any sustain costs to avoid it being discarded. A Dormant spell does not cause any effect and cannot be used to meet requirements. When a spell stops being Dormant, it becomes active again, but it does not trigger any effects that occur at "activation." Activation always mean the first time a card activates. Spells that are not active cannot be made Dormant.

If a spell is made Dormant, all Transmutes combined with that spell likewise become Dormant until the combined spell re-activates. If a Transmute is made Dormant, the combined spell does not become Dormant.

Dormant spells generally cannot be Dispelled or otherwise targeted because spells and effects require active targets unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Durability

An empowerment indicating how many impacts a Shield can withstand. A Defense with Durability is considered to have a Persistent Duration until its Durability is reduced to zero. Durability-based Defenses lose 1 Durability each time they block an effect (see “Shatter” for exception). A Defense might also have Duration counters. A Defense remains active as long as it has EITHER Durability counters OR Duration counters remaining. See “Shield” for special note on not declining to block attacks.

Duration

An empowerment of a spell indicating how many rounds the spell will remain active. Spells without a Duration are discarded right after their first impact. See entries for specifics of the three types of Duration. See also “Durability” for the special case of Shields. See also “Curse Duration.”

Duration #

Indicates that the spell will remain active for # rounds. When a spell with Duration # is activated, place # Duration counters on it. Remove 1 counter during each maintenance phase after the spell impacts. Discard the spell when the last counter is removed.

Duration P or Persistent Duration

Indicates that the spell will remain active indefinitely. When a spell with Duration P is activated, you may wish to place a Persistent Duration token on it as a reminder that it remains in play.

Duration F or Focus Duration

Indicates that the spell will remain active as long as the caster remains focused on the spell. When a spell with Duration F is paid for (i.e. its casting costs are paid), place the caster's Focus on the spell. If the caster's Focus is removed from the spell, immediately discard the spell, unless the spell has become Sealed. See also “Focus.”

Effect

Effects are generated from three sources:

1. A spell being Intoned and placed
2. A spell being resolved in maintenance
3. An ability from an active spell, Specialization, or Artifact being activated or triggered

All of the changes that a spell makes to reality, including the directives in the aspect list and any instructions in the rules section, form a single effect for each spell placement/resolution. Likewise, all of the changes wrought by one

activation of a spell/Artifact/Spec ability form a single effect regardless of how many sentences are needed to describe those changes.

Before an effect impacts, it can be responded to. Or, to be more precise, before any effect resolves, there is a Response phase. Evades, Shields and Wards typically defend against effects from specific Spheres only. Effects that are generated by spells ALWAYS come from at least one Sphere. Unless otherwise noted, that Sphere is the same as the Sphere of the spell itself. Effects from Artifacts or Specs are NOT associated with any Sphere unless explicitly noted in the effect's description. The lack of a Sphere makes such effects immune to most Evades, Shields and Wards. Abjurations and Transmutes target spells, not effects, so they likewise cannot usually affect Artifacts or Spec abilities.

Eloquent

An empowerment of a spell indicating the Magi must Speak the spell in order to cast it. Even worse, the spell has an increased Harmony penalty if miscast. If a Magi misspeaks the Words when casting an Eloquent X spell, he or she loses X Harmony in addition to the usual penalties.

Empowerment

The term for any aspect (see "Aspect") of a spell other than its descriptors and directives. Some empowerments can actually limit a spell's power, such as "Unique to Bearer." See also "Descriptor" and "Directive."

Encounter

Creatures or situations requiring magick to conquer. Encounters are rule-based action engines that Magi may fight on their own, allowing for a solo version of Serpent's Tongue. An Encounter usually includes rules for scaling it up so that a group of Magi may try to take it on for cooperative play.

Energy

A source of power for Magi. Magi channel five energies to work their magick: Resonance, Harmony, Essence, Will and Voice.

Energy Exchange

To trade in an amount of one energy for another. Magi are permitted only one energy exchange per round, but they may make that exchange at any time as desired. There are two ways to trade:

1. Give up 1 Will to gain (choose one):
3 Resonance OR 2 Harmony OR 1 Essence
2. Give up 10 Voice to gain (choose one):
3 Resonance OR 2 Harmony OR 1 Essence OR 1 Will

Enhance Spell

A type of spell that upgrades a Magi in some way. Enhance spells are placed in your Enhancement Zone. You only have 4 Enhancement slots. If a 5th spell is activated then one of the current four spells must be discarded. Specializations and Artifacts also take up an Enhancement slot. Magi may only target themselves or Allies with Enhance spells.

An Enhance spell with Area gives all affected Magi (see "Area") that Enhancement's abilities. It does NOT mean that the abilities granted by the Enhancement now have Area scope. So if you somehow give Area to Beast Form, then all Magi on the team would have the ability to perform a Physical Dmg attack once per round. It would NOT mean that the Physical Dmg attack impacts everyone on the opposing team. Area Enhancements only fill one Magi's slot (place the Enhancement physically into the slot it is taking up).

Enhancement Zone

The zone closest to the Magi containing Enhance spells, Artifacts and Specializations. This zone has only 4 slots. See "Enhance Spell" for details. Curse cards that successfully impact are moved next to this zone and turned sideways. Such Curses are thereafter not affected by the Magi's Defenses.

Essence

The third of the five energies of Magi. Essence represents the body-soul health of a Magi. See "Incapacitated" for effects of reaching zero Essence. Magi cannot heal above their starting Essence (12, unless changed by Artifact/Spec).

Evade

An empowerment on Defense spells usually accompanied by the Response empowerment (see "Response" and "interrupt stone"). An Evade spell targets a single effect and allows its bearer to avoid that effect entirely. An Evade is not a Dispel. An Evade only dodges one impact. If the Evaded effect comes from a spell with Duration, that spell remains in play and may impact again later. Evades cannot dodge Area spells unless explicitly noted in the spell. See also "Effect" for details on how Sphere works with Evades.

Evades can be used to dodge a Curse while it is in the Attack zone, but once a Curse is moved into the Curse zone, Evades, like all Defenses, are useless.

If an Evade spell gains Area, it allows a whole team to dodge the same single impact, but it does not give the Evade the ability to dodge Area offensive spells. Therefore, unless the Evade already allows dodging Area spells, it is mostly useless to give Area to an Evade. The lone use would be as a defense against a spell like Meddle where the target of the offensive spell is changed to another team member.

Exclusive

An empowerment that appears only on Transmutes. Only one Exclusive Transmute may be combined with any target spell. If a second Exclusive Transmute is combined on a spell, the first Exclusive Transmute is discarded. Exclusive Transmutes do NOT prevent non-Exclusive Transmutes from combining with the target spell.

Fluency Level

A measure of how complex and therefore how powerful a given spell is. The fluency of a spell is indicated by the number of white dots in the lower right corner. The higher the Fluency, the more complex the Sehimu Thinara words needed to speak the spell. The same spell title may be printed at multiple Fluencies, where the higher Fluency versions have more potency.

Focus

The gemstone used to mark a spell that requires the Magi's active attention in order to remain active. When paying for a spell with Duration F, the Magi must place his or her Focus on that spell. A Magi may remove the Focus from a spell at any time; the spell will be discarded immediately unless some other force keeps the spell active. See "Duration F" for details. A Magi may replace an Ally's Focus with her own as a Free Action, with the Ally's permission. Alternatively, the Ally may take a Free Action to swap their Focus for the Magi's, with the Magi's permission. The Ally becomes the controller of the spell (must pay sustain costs, can dismiss), but bearer does not change.

Free Action (action type)

A class of Action that does not count toward the maximum two Full Actions a Magi takes each round. Magi have unlimited Free Actions per round. As with Full Actions, Free Actions are taken in turns with other Magi. In other words, on your turn you may take a Full Action or a Free Action, but, regardless of your choice, afterwards the turn will pass to the next Magi. Magi do not have to take an interrupt stone for Free Action Responses. See also "Full Action."

Free Action (spell aspect) and Absolute Free Action

An empowerment of a spell indicating that the spell is cast using a Free Action instead of using a Full Action. Free Action spells must still be prepared unless they also have the Response empowerment. Free Action Response spells do NOT require the caster to take an interrupt stone. Actions are paid when all other costs are paid, meaning that Ritual Paths and Upgrades may add Free Action to a spell.

Adding "Free Action" to a spell that costs "# Actions" only reduces the Full Action requirement by 1. Adding "Absolute Free Action" grants Free Action to a spell even if the spell is a "# Action." spell. See "# Actions."

Full Action

A class of Action that a Magi may perform in the action phase. A Magi has 2 Full Actions each round. These may be spent casting spells, meditating, or activating abilities. See also "Action." Contrast with "Free Action."

Generate

The amount of Resonance and Harmony gained or lost when paying for a spell. Note this does not refer to effects of the spell, such as Infusions, that provide energy. Generate refers only to the spell's energy orb casting costs.

Harmony

The second of the five energies of Magi. Harmony measures the stress of Reality caused by the Magi's exotic magicks. Harmony may be positive or negative. When it is negative, it is called Discord.

Harmony Event

Reward for a Magi working with instead of against Reality. Magi make a Harmony roll each initiative phase when they 7 Harmony or more. A Harmony roll uses 2 10-sided dice. If the sum is less than the Magi's current Harmony, they immediately enjoy a Harmony Event. Every Harmony Event is an immediate gain of 1 Will (NOT ESSENCE -- Essence is for Discord Events).

Immune

An aspect of both spells and Magi indicating that the spell or Magi cannot be affected by the specified type of spell or effect in any way. If a Magi is immune to a single descriptor or aspect on a spell then they are immune to the entire spell. When a Magi is immune to an aspect, only THEY are immune — their spells, defenses, etc. are not immune. For example, if a Magi with an active Flame Form that makes them immune to Heat Dmg had a Shield that blocks Forces; the Shield would lose Durability from blocking a Fireball spell. If the Shield itself was Immune, it would still block but not lose Durability.

Impact

To apply a spell's effect to its target, thereby changing reality. All spells impact at activation. Duration spells impact again each maintenance phase.

Impenetrable

An aspect of a Shield that lets the Shield block Pierce.

Incantation

Another word for "spell," considered more formal by Magi. Because spells in the past had to be Spoken, they were referred to as Incantations. The surge of power unleashed in the Age of Awakening has enabled spells to be cast just

by concentrating on the intent to do so, making this term somewhat obsolete, although many Magi still Intone their spells in order to gain the Voice energy. See "Inscription," "Spell," and "Voice."

Incapacitated

A Magi with zero Essence remaining. Incapacitated Magi cannot spend/gain energies, sustain Focus, or take any Actions. In a team battle, any Duration-based effects they had in play DO remain active and continue to resolve. Victory is normally achieved by incapacitating all opponents. After all players have concluded their maintenance phases, check for any victory conditions. If both teams are incapacitated at this time, the result is a draw. When a Magi is incapacitated, the physical body and any carried magical items (Codex, Artifacts) dissolve into energy to reform at the nearest sacred site or prepared location. This process is painful and can drain the Magi's energies. Death requiring reincarnation is almost never the result of a duel unless the Magi was near death anyway, but consistent coalescence such as this can eventually tatter a Magi's Soul leading to actual death and the need to be reborn and awoken many years or centuries later. Scholars continue to debate whether absolute permanent death is ever possible.

Inexorable

An empowerment indicating that an effect can modify Adamant effects.

Infusion

A directive indicating that the spell or effect heals Magi. Each time an Infusion impacts, its bearer gains that energy. Unless otherwise noted, an Infusion grants Essence. A spell with "Harmony Infusion 2" would grant 2 Harmony when it is first activated and 2 more each maintenance phase. Can never gain more Essence than starting Essence (usually 12).

Initiative Phase

The first of the four phases of a round. In this phase:

- 1) Make the Resonance roll and update energies accordingly.
- 2) Assign initiative for the round. The player with the most Harmony goes first, followed by the player with the next most and so on. Ties are broken by Resonance, Will, then Essence. If all are equal, roll a die to determine initiative. Special rules may apply for team and Encounter battles.
- 3) Make any required Discord rolls or Harmony rolls.

See "Resonance Roll," "Discord Event," and "Harmony Event."

Injunction

Curse effect that prevents a Magi from doing something. The most common are energy injunctions. Most energy injunctions prevent a Magi from gaining that particular energy. Each Injunction defines its limits in its rules text.

Innate Actions

Actions that cannot be limited by general effects. Innate Actions cannot be prevented by effects that control or limit a broad category of Magi actions. Examples: Phased, Pacified, Rage, etc. To limit an innate Action, an effect must name the innate Action specifically in its text. The innate Actions are:

- **Upgrade Specialization** — Each Magi, once per round as a Free Action, may upgrade a single tier of their Specialization. See “Specialization” for details.
- **Dismiss a Controlled Spell** — as a Free Action a Magi may discard a spell/Artifact/Specification they control. Note: choosing to not sustain a spell is different than dismissing it. See also “Vowed”.
- **Swap Focus** — As a Free Action, a Magi may place their Focus onto an active spell and remove an Ally’s Focus already present.
- **Meditate** — As a Full Action, gain 2 Resonance and 1 Harmony.
- **Shed Interrupt Stone** — As a Full Action, discard 1 interrupt stone

Inscription

Another word for “spell,” considered more formal by Magi. Spells are created by taking the words of Sehimu Thinara and embedding their Resonance patterns in paper — an art that can be practiced by very few Magi. The resulting magickal documents are known as Inscriptions. Those rare Magi who create them are known as Inscrivers. See also “Incantation” and “Spell.”

Interrupt Stone

An indicator that the Magi will lose the next Full Action. A Magi may not take a Full Action while they have an interrupt stone. They may however take Free Actions. Magi must spend a Full Action to shed an interrupt stone, which just means they discard it. Stones are acquired when the Magi casts a Response spell that is not also a Free Action spell. If a Magi already has 2 interrupt stones, he or she cannot cast non-Free Action Responses. Other spells may direct Magi to take interrupt stones: offensive effects cannot force a Magi to possess more than 2 interrupt stones at one time nor take more than one per round, but self-inflicted and allied effects can give the Magi an unlimited number of interrupt stones. Gaining or losing Full Actions does not change the limits on possession of interrupt stones.

Invulnerable

An empowerment of a Shield that makes it immune to Subtle, Pierce and Shatter, but not Unblockable. In the great debate about unstoppable force meeting immovable object, in Serpent’s Tongue, the unstoppable force wins.

Koishaka

Any Ally that is created from a spell. Generally, Magi use the term Koishaka for any non-sentient Ally.

Legendary

An empowerment indicating that a spell must be the only spell with its title active at a time by any Magi. If a second spell with the same title, regardless of Fluency, is successfully activated, the first spell is discarded.

Maintenance Phase

The second of the four phases of a round. In this phase, all spells with ongoing effects are resolved (see “Resolve”). Begin by resolving all Attack zones, then all Defense zones (which include Components), then all Curse zones, then all Enhancement zones.

Within each zone, resolve all Global Area spells first, then all team spells (in initiative order), then all individual Magi spells (in initiative order). Within each zone, the Magi or team chooses which order to resolve the particular spells. For the Global Area spells, if there is no unanimous consensus for the order of resolution, choose randomly by rolling dice.

In practice, all Magi in the battle often agree to resolve their personal zones simultaneously to speed up the round. Rarely does the strict ordering affect the outcome. If it does, any Magi may request the strict ordering be applied.

After resolving all zones, check for victory conditions. See “Incapacitated.”

Manifesting

A spell that has been cast (paid for) but has not activated yet. Many Response spells only affect manifesting spells.

Meditation

An innate Full Action wherein a Magi rests to summon energy for future casting. Meditation earns the Magi 2 Resonance and 1 Harmony. No other activity is possible that turn. Meditation does not trigger a Response phase.

Miscast

A gross mispronunciation of the phrase or letters that describe the spell in Sehimu Thinara. Opponents shout “Kotukh!” whenever a spell is miscast. The caster immediately loses 1 Harmony; all other Magi (including Allies of the caster) gain 1 Resonance. The spell is returned to the unprepared section of the Codex. The caster does not lose a Full Action for miscasting, but the turn still passes to the next Magi in initiative order. The caster cannot cast any spells with the same title of a spell they miscast this TURN.

Nam-Shub

A powerful, world-altering spell that may provide unique victory conditions. Nam-Shubs are inscribed on full Codex pages. There is no limit to the number of Nam-Shubs your Codex may contain. Nam-Shubs often take multiple Actions to complete. Directions for completing a Nam-Shub appear on the Nam-Shub page itself. To begin casting a Nam-Shub, as a Free Action, remove the page from your Codex and place it beside your team zone. A team may only be working on one Nam-Shub at a time. Only one step of a Nam-Shub may be completed per round by the team.

Nam-Shubs as a whole are immune to regular spells, Specification abilities and Artifacts. Nam-Shubs may be affected by other Nam-Shubs. The subparts of a Nam-Shub may be targetable — check the Nam-Shub's text for specifics.

Obliteration

An effect that immediately incapacitates a target. See "Incapacitated."

Offensive Action

Any Action that targets opponents or their zones with a spell or ability. Defenses protect against all offensive effects. Targeting an opponent's spell in your own Attack zone is not considered an offensive effect because it is targeting something in one of your own zones.

Owner

The Magi from whose Codex a spell originated. No magickal effect can ever alter the owner of a spell. Spells may be bartered, gifted or stolen in more mundane ways, of course.

Passive Effect

Ongoing effects that do not 'impact' each maintenance phase. Passive effects often empower or weaken other spells. For example, Flame Form provides the passive effect of increasing the Dmg of the bearer's Heat Attack spells. Many Curse spells cause passive effects.

Phased

A state of being where a Magi or spell is out of sync with the rest of Reality, thereby limiting interactions between Reality and the phased entity. Each spell that causes Phased includes in its text what specific limitations are imposed. Most spells that Phase Magi cause the same effect: the Magi may not take actions except to meditate but are immune to offensive effects. Their spells, however, are not also Phased unless specified.

Pierce

An empowerment of Attacks that allows Dmg to penetrate Shields. Each rank of Pierce allows 1 point of Dmg to penetrate the Shield. Only as much Dmg gets through as was in the original impact, even if that is less than the Pierce ranking. For example, a spell with “ Dmg 2, Pierce 3” would transfer only 2 Dmg through. Pierce does not ADD Dmg; it just allows some Dmg to get through. Pierce only allows Dmg through, but all other effects are blocked. Curses with a Dmg aspect and the Pierce empowerment would get Dmg through but the Curse would still be blocked and considered unsuccessful.

Durability Shields lose only one Durability charge regardless of the Pierce rank. If there are 2 (or more) blocking Shields, Pierce will do only 1 Durability to each inner Shield as it penetrates, even if the original impact had a Shatter aspect. Pierce Dmg is stopped by an Impenetrable or Invulnerable Shield.

Potency

The measure of a spell's ability to overcome an Encounter's Resistance. Some Encounters are immune to weak magick. In order to affect an Encounter, a spell must have Potency equal to or greater than the Encounter's Resistance. The Potency of any spell is equal to its Fluency plus 1 for each tier of its ritual path that is unlocked plus 1 for each Transmute combined with it.

Prevented

Any ban on casting some or all types of spells or taking a broad category of actions. The spells Silence, Rage, Pacify, and Phase are examples of Prevented effects. These are considered Control effects. Most Control effects have a ‘Will break’ to get out of the spell. By default Will breaks are Free Action unless otherwise specified. See also “Will Break.”

Priority (for Response casting)

The right to cast the next Response spell. When a Magi casts a spell, she always has priority for casting the first Response to that spell. Thus a Magi may cast a whole string of spells or activate Response effects before opponents or allies have any option to respond. When she finishes, opponents and allies race for the option to be the next to reply by shouting, “Fasul!” The first to call fasul gets the right to cast the next Response. If a Koishaka is going to respond, its controller calls fasul on its behalf.

Re-activate

To move from Dormant back to Active. When a spell re-activates, it simply resumes being Active. It does not impact. See also “Dormant.”

Re-Attune

To bring a discarded spell back into your Codex. Spells may only be re-attuned during the spell preparation phase. Each round, each Magi may re-attune one non-Bonded spell at a Resonance cost of 1 plus the fluency level of the spell. A Magi may re-attune an unlimited number of Bonded spells by paying 1 Resonance per spell. Any number of Burned Foci may be re-attuned as well by paying 1 Resonance for each.

Refined

An empowerment of a Shield that enables it to block Subtle effects.

Requirements

Conditions that must be met or payments that must be made in order to cast or sustain a spell. Requirements, if a spell has any, are found at the top of the rules section of a spell, marked with a (!) symbol. Any conditions that are listed there, such as "Caster must have fewer than 5 Essence" must be true when you pay for the spell. Any payments such as "Discard a Matter Component" must be made at that time. If the requirements list a "to sustain" condition or payment, that is made during the maintenance phase. See "Sustain" for details. Most requirements necessitate that the caster control the requirement in question, the exception is when something is required to be on a bearer (see below). The most common types of Requirements (may be needed either to cast or to sustain) are:

! Active [Spell] - This spell must be active and controlled by the caster.

! Discard [Spell/Charge] - The spell or charge must be controlled by the caster and discarded.

! 2 Actions - See "# Actions."

! Active [Spell, Condition, Status] on Bearer - The spell or ability that fulfills this condition does NOT need to be controlled by the caster.

Resilient

An empowerment of a Shield that makes it immune to Shatter.

Resistance

An attribute of some Encounters. See "Potency" for details.

Resolve

To pay a spell's sustain costs (if any), impact any of its effects and countdown its Duration. Resolution is performed in the maintenance phase.

Resonance

The first of the five energies of Magi. Resonance is the exhilarating, addictive flow of energy that infuses a Magi. It is the electric breath of creation that fills a Magi, parceling out a portion of omnipotence. A Speaker's power can ramp up quickly in a single encounter, but then drain away almost as quickly as the rush of Magick fades. Resonance cannot ever be negative.

Resonance Roll

The part of the initiative phase where the round's Resonance bonus is awarded. Any Magi rolls the ten-sided die. All Magi (including Encounters and Koishaka if they have the Resonance stat) receive Resonance.

- 1, 2 or 3 = 1 Resonance
- 4, 5, or 6 = 2 Resonance
- 7, 8, or 9 = 3 Resonance
- 10 = See "Resonance Overload"

Resonance Overload

A blast of Resonance energy that disorients all Magi. A Resonance Overload occurs naturally when the Resonance roll is a 10. All Magi earn 5 Resonance and lose 1 Harmony. Koishaka are affected by the Harmony loss only if they have a Harmony stat.

Response

An empowerment indicating that the spell may be cast out of turn in response to another spell being cast or an ability being activated. You may respond to spells/effects of your own, of an ally, or of an opponent. Responses may be cast to respond even to other Responses. Response spells do not need to be prepared to be cast. Casting a Response requires the Magi to take an interrupt stone unless the spell also has the Free Action aspect.

Rite Zone

A special zone outside of active play where Magi place spells that either require multiple actions to cast or whose activation was somehow suspended by another spell. Whenever a Magi is Disrupted, any spells in the Rite zone are discarded. See # Actions.

Ritual Path

A series of improvements that may be optionally purchased when a spell is cast. The Ritual Path is the chain of four boxes found at the bottom of spells of fluency level 2 and higher. It shows how the Magi may add extra energy to make the spell more wondrous. Each box, called a tier, either has "N/A" in it or some aspect. The "N/A" tiers do nothing; the others add that aspect to the spell. You must purchase tiers from left to right, including the "N/A" tiers.

Tiers cost 1 Harmony for 1 tier or 1 Will for 3 tiers. Tiers must be paid when paying the other casting costs of the spell; they cannot be purchased later. Human Allies may help to upgrade your Ritual Path at the same price. An Ally's investment is cumulative with your own.

Round

A sequence of 4 phases: initiative, maintenance, spell preparation and action.

Sacrifice

To discard a spell from one's own Codex. The Magi who owns the Codex is the one who chooses which spells are sacrificed unless explicitly otherwise.

Sealed

An upgrade that converts a Duration F(ocus) spell into a Duration P(ersistent) spell. Sealed spells no longer require Focus to Sustain; the spell is no longer susceptible to Disrupt.

Sehimu Thinara

The Language of magick and command of Reality. This is believed by Magi scholars to be the mother tongue of all human languages. Each spell includes a record of the Words that must be either called to mind or spoken aloud to cast that spell. See "Voice." The written form of Sehimu Thinara is Awatum.

Shape-Shift

An empowerment of Enhance spells. Shape-shifts can augment your spells or give you new abilities. By default you can only have 1 active Shape-Shift. If you gain a second Shape-Shift, immediately discard the existing Shape-Shift. If an Ally's Shape-Shift gains Area, this counts as you gaining a Shape-Shift; you gaining a Shape-Shift will discard your Ally's Area Shape-Shift

Shatter

An empowerment of Attacks that removes extra Durability from an impacted Shield. When an effect is blocked by a Durability Shield, the Shield normally loses 1 Durability charge. If the attack has Shatter X, the Shield loses X additional Durability charges. Even if this destroys the Shield, the Shield still stops the effect entirely. If there are any inner Shields, they are unaffected, even if the effect had more Shatter strength than was needed to destroy the outer Shield. Shields that are Resilient or Invulnerable are immune to Shatter.

Shed Discord

A directive to remove negative Harmony. Shed does not allow the Magi to gain positive Harmony. If a Magi has -3 Harmony (aka 3 Discord) and Sheds 4 Discord, he is now at 0 Harmony.

Shield

An empowerment on Defense spells. Shields block offensive effects, each Shield will have a Sphere icon in the broadcast bar for each Sphere it can block. There are two types of Shields, Duration, and Durability. Durability based shields lose a Durability each time they block an effect. Shields may be placed in front of each other. If an outer shield blocks an effect, the inner shield is unaffected. Shields protect themselves (so a Soul Shield cannot be dispelled by a Soul Dispel). Magi may re-order their Shields before each attacking effect impacts so as to provide the most optimal defense for each one. Magi may NOT decline to Shield an effect (i.e. if a Shield can block an incoming spell, it will; Magi cannot choose to let a small effect slip by in order to save Durability for a larger spell coming later). See also "Effect" for information on how Sphere affects Shields.

Siphon

A directive that deals energy Dmg to a target and then Infuses the caster with the amount of Dmg caused. For example, Harmony Siphon 2 would cause 2 Harmony Dmg to the target, and, if successful, would Infuse the caster with 2 Harmony. If the target Warded 1 Harmony Dmg then the caster would only gain 1 Harmony. The Dmg and Infusion happen together; there is no separate Response phase for the Infusion.

Specialization

Memories of past lives that, when recalled, give the Magi a tactical advantage in the current battle. Each Magi may begin battle with one active Specialization. Specializations, aka Specs, may not be put into play once the battle begins. The Spec takes up an Enhancement slot. It can be voluntarily dismissed to open up the slot, but this is usually unwise. The Magi who has the Spec is referred to as the Spec's bearer. Magi begin with the Initiate ability. As an Free Action, additional abilities may be unlocked by paying the cost shown either in Resonance or in Voice (see "Voice"). You must unlock tier 1 of a tree before tier 2, but you may unlock the two trees (A or B) in either order. Unless otherwise stated, all Spec abilities and upgrades ONLY affect spells the bearer controls or abilities the bearer activates. Unlocking is an innate Action that cannot be stopped by effects such as Pacified.

Spell

The informal term for an Inscription. This word is used in daily conversations among Magi. See also "Inscription" and "Incantation." Spells are stored in Codexes because the cards themselves are the source of power and the power is unstable. Codexes are specially crafted Artifacts specifically designed to keep stored spells from randomly emitting power. The controlled release of power requires a Magi's intent.

Spell Loss

A directive that forces the target to remove spells from their Codex. Each Spell Loss effect will define whether the spells are Sacrificed, Banished or returned to the Codex unprepared.

Spell Preparation

The third of the four phases of a round. Magi may prepare up to 3 spells by placing them in the front pocket of their Codex. During the round, Magi may only cast prepared spells and Response spells. Any spell that is prepared but is not cast by the end of the round returns to the inner pages of the Codex. In competitive games, any Magi may close their spell codex and turn the Cast timer. All other Magi must finish preparing their spells before the timer ends. Note the Magi who turns the cast timer may not reopen their Codex until spell prep ends. This is also the phase in which Magi may re-attune spells.

Spoken

The stage of the Cast Cycle when a spell has been spoken successfully. Contrast with "Miscalc." Actually speaking the cast phrase of a spell is optional, although some Magi may wish to challenge each other to duels requiring the Words and Gestures. Successfully speaking and gesturing earns the speaker Voice energy. See "Voice."

Subtle

An empowerment that makes an attack bypass Shields that would normally block the Attack. Shields that are Refined block Subtle Attacks. Because Subtle bypasses Shields entirely, if an Attack is Subtle, any Shatter or Pierce it also has does not apply. Wards and Evades are not affected by Subtle.

Sustain

A cost to be paid or condition that must be true for an active spell to remain active. When a spell is resolved (see "Resolve") in the maintenance phase, the sustain requirements must be paid and checked before the effect impacts. If the Magi chooses to not pay to sustain then the spell then it is discarded without any of its other effects occurring. Note: if the sustain costs are not paid or the requirements not met then the spell is discarded even if it says it "cannot be dismissed" or has the Vowed aspect.

Target

The intended recipient of manifesting spells or effects. Targets may be specified as any element of the battle. If the target is a Magi and the spell has Duration then after the spell activates, the target is called the bearer. See "Bearer" for more details. Target is declared when a spell is cast, but its validity is checked before a spell activates (after all Responses). If a target is

no longer valid then the spell fizzles and is discarded.

Team Zone

A zone containing all Magi on one team, including humans, Encounters, and any Koishaka which they may control. Any incoming attacks must pass through the Team zone before any Magi's personal zone so that Area Shields get a chance to block first before a Magi's personal Shields.

Title

The name of the spell. Spells with the same title but different fluency levels still count as the same spell for Codex limits and other title-specific effects. A normal Codex may contain at most 3 spells of any single title.

Transmute Spell

A type of spell that targets and combines with other spells and modifies them for some Duration. The effect of a Transmute is removed when the Transmute is discarded. If the combined spell is discarded, the Transmute is also discarded. See also "Abjuration spell."

Turn

All of the activity involved in resolving one Magi's Action. During the round, Magi take turns performing Actions in initiative order. See "Initiative."

Unblockable

The ultimate empowerment that says an effect may not be defended against. Unblockable spells are unaffected by Defense spells. They may still be targeted by non-Defense spells and abilities.

Unique to Bearer

A spell restriction that allows only one of these spells with that title to be active on a bearer. If a second spell of the same title activates on the bearer, the original is immediately discarded.

Unique to Caster

A spell restriction that allows only one spell with that title to be controlled by a single Magi. If the caster activates a second spell of the same title then the original is immediately discarded. Likewise, if the caster gains control of a duplicate spell, the original is discarded.

Unique to Codex

A spell restriction that allows a Magi to have only 1 spell of that title in their Codex at a time. For example, a Codex that contains 1 copy of Universum Negation (Fluency 1) could not also contain a second copy nor could it contain Universum Negation (Fluency 4).

Unique to Descriptor X

A spell restriction that requires that spell to be the only active spell with descriptor X globally. When one of these activates, globally discard all other spells with that descriptor (regardless of Defenses). If another spell with that descriptor activates, from any Magi, discard the original.

Upgrade

An optional condition or extra payment that, if met, improves the utility of a spell. Upgrades, if a spell has any, are found at the end of the rules section marked with a (^) symbol. The condition must be true or the extra payment must be made at the time the rest of the casting costs are paid. If you choose not to upgrade at that time, there is no option to upgrade later, unless the Upgrade specifies an alternate timing such as 'per round' or 'this impact'. See also "Ritual Path."

Utilize

A spell that requires an energy or another spell is utilizing that energy/spell.

Veiled

An empowerment indicating that an effect has no Response phase. No one can respond to a Veiled spell or ability.

Voice

The fifth of the five energies of Magi. Voice is a Magi's reward for actually Speaking (and gesturing) the Words of Sehimu Thinara, the language of Magick, when casting a spell. Speaking the Words of a spell is optional. Magi run the risk of a miscalculation when they attempt it, but if they succeed, they are rewarded with Voice in an amount equal to the spell's fluency level, tracked using the small diamond counters. Voice may be spent 1-for-1 instead of Resonance to unlock Specialization tiers (you can mix Resonance and Voice to pay for one Spec upgrade). 10 Voice may be used to perform an energy exchange. See "Energy Exchange" for details.

Voluntary Discard

See "Dismiss."

Vowed

An empowerment indicating that the spell or Artifact cannot be dismissed by its controller. See "Dismiss."

Ward

An empowerment on Defense spells for mitigating Dmg. By default, these spells will reduce Essence Dmg by 1. Wards, being a Defense spell, do not reduce

Glossary

Dmg from Curses. Some Wards will specify that they mitigate other types of Dmg or Spell Loss. Wards only work after Dmg has impacted on the Magi; they do not stop the spell from impacting. Wards for the same energy do NOT stack: if you have 2 Wards that each Ward 1 Essence Dmg, they would collectively have the same effect as 1 Ward that Warded 1 Essence Dmg. See also “Effect” for information on how Sphere affects Wards.

Will

The fourth of the five energies of Magi. Will is gleaned from the blessing on a Magi’s soul that allows them to transcend the limitations of Mind and Language and demand the Universe align with their purpose. 1 Will may used to perform an energy exchange. See “Energy Exchange” for details.

Will Breaks

An option to discard a spell or end an effect by spending Will. Most spells that limit the types of actions the bearer can take (Rage, Pacify, Phase, etc.) have a Will break. By default, exercising a break is a Free Action.

Zones

Abstract areas on the table used to organize active effects, determine whether an effect is offensive, and to resolve timing conflicts.



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